GOSPEL DOCTRINES

W. T. CONNER

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F. D. Bachman

W. A. Fite
1705 S. Madison
San Angelo, Texas 76901

GOSPEL DOCTRINES

W. T. CONNER

Gospel Doctrines

By W. T. CONNER

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD
OF THE
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

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To the memory
of
my father,
a plain country deacon
and the best man
I ever knew,
this book is gratefully
dedicated.

PREFACE

This course makes no attempt to cover all the doctrines of religion. It aims to consider only the central doctrines of the gospel of Christ; and in treating these it makes no effort at being exhaustive. The author has tried to give a clear and concise statement of the fundamental ideas of the gospel. He is probably as well aware as anybody else will be of the imperfection of the result.

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W. T. CONNER.

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DIRECTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF THIS BOOK

For those who wish to study the book as a part of the Convention Normal Course, the following directions are given:

1. *Lesson Assignments.*

Ordinarily each chapter will constitute a suitable lesson assignment. Two or three lesson periods should be given at intervals to a review of the lessons previously covered. Thus classes meeting daily would complete the study of the book in about three weeks, while classes meeting once a week would require about three months.

2. *Examinations*:

(1) The teacher will conduct a written examination at the close of the study of the book.

(2) The questions may be selected by the class teacher from the list of questions given at the close of each chapter. The teacher will ask that each one sign this statement: "I have neither given nor received help during this examination."

(3) Members of the class will be asked to answer the questions at one sitting without the text-book or help of any kind.

(4) The class teacher will examine the papers of the class, and on blanks which will be furnished for the purpose, will send the names of those who make the required grade of 70 per cent, to the State Sunday School Secretary or the Educational Department, Baptist Sunday School Board, 161 Eighth Ave., North, Nashville, Tennessee. The proper seal will be sent to be attached to the diploma.

3. *Individual Students may pursue the study in their own way.*

When they are ready for examination, they will apply for a list of questions with necessary instructions. The questions will be selected from the lists given at the close of each chapter.

EDUCATIONAL SECRETARY
BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD
NASHVILLE, TENN.

THE NEW TESTAMENT: OUR GOSPEL SOURCE BOOK

I. Outline of New Testament Material

1. Facts concerning Jesus.
   (1) His character.
   (2) His teachings.
   (3) His life of service.
   (4) His death and resurrection.
2. Evangelistic and missionary achievements of the gospel.
3. The apostolic interpretation of Jesus.
4. Forecast of the final triumph of God's kingdom.

II. The Reliability of the New Testament

1. Two phases of the question—historical and religious.
2. Historical reliability.
   Important evidences.
   (1) Sincerity of witnesses.
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3. Reliability of religious teachings.
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Old Testament a preparation for the New.
(1) In its history.
(2) In its law.
(3) In personal experiences.
(4) In Messianic element.

GOSPEL DOCTRINES

I

THE NEW TESTAMENT: OUR GOSPEL SOURCE BOOK

By the gospel we mean the message of light, life and joy—the good news—that came to the world through Jesus Christ (Matt. 4: 23; Mark 1: 1, etc., Amer. Rev., margin). The purpose of this book is to set forth the teachings of this gospel concerning God, man and their relations to each other, especially the teachings concerning the salvation from sin that came to man through Jesus Christ.

It is evident at once, if we are to study the teachings set forth in the gospel, that the New Testament will be our main source of information.

I. Outline of New Testament Material

Since it is to be our main source of information, it might be well to take a general survey of the New Testament with reference to the facts and teachings there recorded.

1. The Facts Concerning Jesus Himself

Since the gospel centers in him, grew out of his life and work, in fact is a gospel concerning him and his saving work, there is nothing more important in understanding the gospel and its teachings than the facts concerning him. The four Gospels are taken up mainly with an account of the facts of the life of Jesus. These facts about him should be our starting point in understanding the gospel. A few of the outstanding features of his life we notice.

(1) *His character.* In considering the claims of any great religious leader or teacher, one of the first questions to arise is the question as to what kind of a man he is. We would not be willing to pay much attention to the teaching of a man who was corrupt in character; especially would we not be willing to put our faith in such a man concerning anything that he might claim to achieve for us in our relation to God.

More attention will be given later to the question of the sinlessness of Jesus.* Here we simply note the fact that the New Testament presents him as perfect in character. He manifested no consciousness of sin. His fellowship with God was complete and unbroken (Matt. 11: 27). Some of the New Testament writers expressly affirm his sinlessness (2 Cor. 5: 21; Heb. 7: 26). He went through the fires of suffering and temptation and came out in the strength of a perfect manhood. Here he stands apart from and above all other men.

(2) *His teaching.* The four Gospels give large space to the teaching of Jesus. Among the world's religious teachers he stands first. He dealt with such central and fundamental questions of religion as the character of God, his love and providential care for his children, his wisdom and power; the nature growth, requirements and triumph of the kingdom; the nature and ideal of righteousness, and the demands of one's relations to his fellowman.

His teaching was popular in form. He used brief, pointed sayings that stick in the mind. His illustrations are taken from the every-day life of the people. He teaches by the use of stories and pictures that impress the imagination, provoke thought and are easily recalled. His parables stand at the head of the world's literature of this class. It is no trouble to see how important a factor the teaching of Jesus is for an understanding of the nature and teachings of the gospel of Jesus.

(3) *His life of service.* Another important item in the gospel account of Jesus is his life of service to his fellowman. He gave himself unreservedly to the service of others. He went about doing good. He came not to be served but to serve (Mark 10: 45). His miracles were means of expressing his compassion for the needy and the unfortunate. They were meant to impress men with his

*See Chapter II.

superhuman goodness as well as with his supernatural power. Jesus never worked a miracle to make people open their mouths in astonishment at his power. His power was always subordinate to his goodness.

Here we are getting close to the heart of the gospel. Any conception that does not square with the character and mission of Jesus as revealed in his deeds of benevolence is no part of the gospel.

(4) *His death and resurrection.* Another factor in the gospel account of Jesus is his death and resurrection. The four Gospels distinctly affirm that Jesus looked forward to his death as an essential factor in his mission. According to the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus tried, from the time of the great confession at Cæsarea Philippi, to get his disciples to understand that he was to die (Mark 8: 31ff; 9: 31; 10: 32ff, etc.). This they could not grasp. According to John's Gospel, there were indications even earlier than this that he was looking forward to the cross (John 2: 19ff; 3: 14, 15). A large part of the Gospel accounts is taken up with the events immediately preceding his death and the crucifixion itself.

But, according to these accounts, Jesus rose from the dead. His followers and friends found the tomb empty. He appeared to different individuals and groups among his disciples. He gave them instruction about their mission during forty days and finally ascended before their eyes (Matt. 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20, 21; Acts 1; 1 Cor. 15).

This is an analysis of the material given us in the four Gospels concerning Jesus and his life on earth as witnessed by his disciples. These general facts constitute an indispensable element in the material to be interpreted in an account of the teachings of the gospel of Christ.

2. Evangelistic and Missionary Achievements

Following the account of the life of Christ in the Gospels, we have the next stage of development of events in the book of Acts. This is an account of the evangelistic and missionary operations of some of the followers of Jesus, beginning on the day of Pentecost, about ten days after the ascension of Jesus, when the Holy Spirit came upon the waiting disciples and they testified to Jesus as the risen and reigning Lord. As a source of material

for gospel doctrines, the book of Acts contains the following important factors:

(1) *It bears witness to the fact that the risen Christ sent the Holy Spirit upon his disciples and endued them with divine power for bearing witness to him.* Through the Spirit, he kept in touch with his followers and gave them providential guidance for carrying out the mission which he had given them before his ascension. (See 1: 1, 2, 8; ch. 2; 4: 31; 5: 32; 13: 2, 4; 16: 7, etc.)

(2) *It also sets forth that in obedience to the command of Jesus, and under his impelling providence, the bounds of a narrow Jewish nationalism were broken through and Christianity became in spirit and character a world-wide religion.* This was done partly through Peter, but mainly through Paul whom God raised up for that purpose.

(3) *We see here, not only the missionary and evangelistic quality of Christianity, but also the power of the gospel to conquer hostile and stubborn hearts, Jewish and Gentile.* In the Acts, we have an account of the firm planting of the gospel in many of the great commercial centers of the Roman Empire, including Rome itself.

3. The Apostolic Interpretation of Jesus

Another important element in the New Testament as the main source for the doctrinal teaching of the gospel is the apostolic interpretation of Jesus and his work.

This interpretation is found somewhat in the four Gospels and the book of Acts, but mainly in the Epistles. There is a considerable element of this interpretation in the Gospels, especially in John's Gospel. Then we have preserved for us a considerable amount of interpretation in the speeches in Acts, especially the speeches or sermons of Peter and Paul.

But the main element of interpretation we have in the Epistles. Here Paul has furnished us with the most material. He is perhaps the most important interpreter of Christianity that we have in the New Testament. Peter, James, John and Jude give us some brief letters of more or less importance. Then we have the very important letter to the Hebrews, written by some unknown hand of the apostolic age, and probably in close touch with some of the apostles themselves.

4. Forecast of the Triumph of God's Kingdom

Another feature of the New Testament that should be kept in mind is the forecast of the complete triumph of the kingdom of God. There is one book especially where this comes out—the book of Revelation. We have features of this in practically all the books of the New Testament; but in the book of Revelation this is the main feature. The book was evidently written in a time when there was fierce persecution of Christians by the Roman Empire. On the dark background of this period of suffering John sets forth in graphic figures the final and complete triumph of Christianity over every form of opposition.

Now the New Testament, with these four main features—the facts of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus; the propagation and missionary triumphs of the gospel during the New Testament period; the interpretation of Jesus and his saving work by his followers; and the forecast of the final triumph of Christianity over all opposition—this constitutes our main source of material for the interpretation of the doctrines of the gospel.

II. The Reliability of the New Testament

But the question would naturally arise as to the reliability of the New Testament. If this is to be the main source of information for us, we would want to know whether or not we could depend on it.

1. Two Phases of the Question

There would be at least two phases of this question of major importance for us.

One is the question of the historical reliability of its accounts. Christianity is a historical religion. It is founded upon the facts of the life, teaching, work, death and resurrection of Jesus and the events that grow immediately out of these.

Another phase of the matter that is of fundamental importance is with reference to the reliability of the religious teachings of the New Testament. If the supposed facts recorded in the New Testament are really facts, still what about the interpretation of those facts there

given? Have Peter, Paul and the other New Testament writers given us a true interpretation of Jesus and his work?

While these two phases of the matter can be distinguished in thought, they are inevitably bound up together. We can readily see that the religious value of the New Testament is destroyed if it is not historically reliable.

On the other hand, if the purported facts recorded there are really facts, then the New Testament must be reliable as a religious authority and guide. This conclusion grows out of two considerations. One is that the religious significance of the New Testament lies mainly in the historical facts recorded in it. The gospel of Christ is based on historical facts, and its foundation facts, recorded in the New Testament, are of such a nature as to carry with them the explanation of the facts given in the New Testament. If Jesus was such a person as the New Testament represents him to be, if his teaching was such as we find in the Gospels, if he died, rose again and ascended as the Gospels and other New Testament books say, then his significance for the religious life of man must be what the New Testament represents it to be. If the account with reference to his life, character, teaching, death and resurrection is true, then no other explanation of these facts can be admitted than the one the New Testament writers give. One can no more admit these facts concerning Jesus and then deny the New Testament meaning given him than one can admit that all the light and heat of the solar system come from the sun and then deny that the sun is central in that system. In other words, no other man can mean to the religious lives of men what Jesus does, because no other man ever was what Jesus was or did what Jesus did.

2. Historical Reliability

The question of the historical reliability of the New Testament has been so often and so thoroughly discussed that it is not necessary here to go extensively into the question.

Yet there are a few facts that appear on the face of the New Testament accounts that are so important as

bearing on the question of the historical reliability of the New Testament that we notice them briefly.

(1) *One is that the New Testament writers and speakers were sincere.* They bore testimony in the face of tremendous opposition. They staked all on the facts to which they were witnessing. Often they sealed their testimony with their own blood. This fact excludes the view that they consciously invented the stories that they told. For instance, they evidently did not consciously invent the story of the resurrection of Jesus and pass it off on others. It cost them too much to bear witness to his resurrection to believe that they made up the story and passed it off on other people as a "pious fraud."

(2) *Another important thing to remember is that these men had opportunity to know the facts to which they testified.* Some of them were the personal disciples of Jesus. They heard his teachings, witnessed his deeds, saw him crucified, met and heard him after the resurrection, and beheld his ascension. Those who were not the personal disciples of Jesus, such as Mark, Luke, and Paul, came into contact with Peter and others who did know the facts. Mark was a member of the Jerusalem church and knew Peter (Acts 12: 12, 25, etc). Paul before his conversion persecuted the church in Jerusalem, and after his conversion spent fifteen days in Jerusalem with Peter and often visited the city (Acts 8: 1-3; 9: 26-30; 15: 1ff; 21: 17ff; Gal. 1: 18, etc). Luke tells us that he carefully investigated before writing. The indication is that he used oral tradition and written documents as sources for his material (Luke 1: 1-3).

Here then are two very important items concerning these New Testament witnesses. They were men of sincerity and they had ample opportunity to know the facts about which they testify.

(3) *Again, they were men of intelligence.* They appear to be men of at least ordinary good sense. They were not over-credulous enthusiasts who were ready to accept any report of a supposedly miraculous event as true. They used their senses and their good sense. Their testimony therefore should be accepted unless there are good reasons to the contrary. Being sincere men of normal minds, and giving evidence that they looked into the facts and reported as facts only what they had good reason to believe to be facts, we have no right to set

aside their testimony as being only superstitious tales of fanatical enthusiasts who could not distinguish fact from fancy. The position of some modern writers practically amounts to saying that.

We believe that these men were men of good sense, who distinguished fact from fancy, and as honest men told the truth in their writings.

3. The Reliability of the Religious Teachings of the New Testament

As shown above, if the New Testament is accepted as historically reliable, that would very largely, if not entirely, settle the question of the truth of its religious teachings and therefore of its authority.

But there are some other tests that can be applied to the religious teachings of the New Testament. Are the religious teachings of the New Testament true? Consider some things bearing on that question.

(1) *One is the religious experience of the New Testament writers.* These writers had realized in their own lives the transforming power of the gospel they preached and wrote about. They had been revolutionized by their contact with Jesus or by their contact with his immediate disciples. They had the assurance that through his gospel they had come into a new and vital fellowship with God. About this there was no doubt in their minds. This gospel wrought a moral and spiritual revolution in them. They were lifted onto a plane of unselfish living and service to others higher than anything they had ever known. In their own religious lives they had evidence of the truth of the gospel. One can know that the gospel is true as he knows that sugar is sweet—by trying it.

(2) *Another thing to note is the power of the gospel in history.* The gospel has exercised an uplifting power in human history from New Testament times down to the present. From then until now there has been a line of witnesses who have testified to the power of the gospel. They have experienced the same transforming power that the Christians of New Testament days did. But the gospel has not only exercised this power in the lives of individuals, it has also exercised great influence over society. Communities have been revolutionized by it, and even whole nations uplifted. Great social evils have been up-

rooted, such as slavery. Womanhood and childhood have been blessed and elevated. The social, moral and intellectual leadership of the world has for centuries belonged to the nations in which Christianity was the dominant religion.

This power of the gospel is still being manifested in the world. Wherever the gospel is being proclaimed in the world today, among all nationalities and classes of men, it is winning its triumphs in the lives of individuals, in the uplifting of social and moral ideals, and in the actual transformation of society.

4. Conclusion

In line with what has been said, we hold that the New Testament constitutes a reliable and authoritative statement of the facts of the gospel and of the meaning of that gospel for us. These writings, we believe, were given to the world in the providence of God and as a part of the work of the Holy Spirit in guiding the followers of Christ into all truth (John 16: 13).

This agrees with the belief of evangelical Christians generally concerning the place of the New Testament in the lives of Christians. The writings embodied in the New Testament have a value and authority that no writings since have had or can have. This is due to two things. One was their exceptional privilege in knowing the facts about Jesus. The other was the guidance of the Spirit in guiding them into all truth. The New Testament with its gospel message therefore never gets out of date. It comes to human hearts with their sense of sin and their burden of sorrow today as a message direct from the heart of God, with power to uplift and transform men as nothing else the world has ever known.

III. Relation of the New Testament to the Old

The New Testament, however, as the main source of our information concerning the gospel of Christ, must be interpreted in relation to the Old Testament. The Old Testament constitutes an indispensable background for understanding the New. The gospel did not come as something for which there had been no preparation. There had been a long line of preparation for the coming of

Jesus and his gospel. The record of this preparation we have in the Old Testament.

As constituting a preparation for the coming of the gospel we might notice certain features.

1. The Preparation

One is the preparation in history. The Old Testament gives us the record of a long line of historical preparation for the New Testament religion. There was definite historical preparation in the calling of Abraham and his descendants to be the peculiar people of God; in the institution and development of the national life of Israel, with a national religion, with a distinctive code of laws and ceremonies, a separate priesthood, etc.; in the providential judgments sent on Israel for her unfaithfulness to the national covenant and her idolatry; and especially in the inculcation of the doctrine of one God and the spiritual religion of the prophets.

2. The Mosaic Law

A special feature in Old Testament religion that helped to prepare the way for the gospel of Jesus was the Mosaic law with its commands, its priesthood and the ceremonies and sacrifices. Paul shows how the law, regarded as moral requirement, prepared the way for Christ by developing in men the sense of sin and helplessness and thus preparing them to receive the gospel of the grace of God (Rom. 5: 13; 7: 7ff; Gal. 3: 23, 24). The book of Hebrews shows how the ceremonial and priestly aspects of the law perform a similar function and find their fulfilment in Christ and his sacrificial work. (See especially chs. 7-10.)

3. Personal Experience

Another feature in Old Testament religion that constituted an important preparation for the gospel of Christ was the element of personal experience in God's dealings with men. This comes out especially in the psalms and the writings of the prophets. Although not so distinct nor universal as in the New Testament, there were men in Old Testament times who were distinctly conscious of God's approach to them and

his dealings with them in forgiving, cleansing and guiding grace. Men knew themselves as sinful and unworthy and God as holy and gracious. The language of some of these Old Testament saints will be used by Christians to the end of time in confession, prayer and praise.

4. The Messianic Element

Perhaps the most direct preparation in the Old Testament for the gospel was the Messianic element. There were certain promises and other features in the Old Testament that led the Jews to look forward to the coming of an anointed One, a Messiah who should be for them a great king and deliverer. Certain persons and institutions are regarded in the New Testament as having their fulfilment in Jesus and his work: such persons as Moses and David and such institutions as the priesthood and sacrifices. The promised Son of David as king and the suffering servant of Isaiah were looking toward Jesus as King and Savior. (See 2 Sam. 7: 12ff; Isa. 53, etc.)

There were thus these four somewhat distinct, yet intermingled features of Old Testament preparation for the coming of Jesus and his gospel. The New Testament must be interpreted in the light of this providential preparation.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give the three main divisions of the chapter on the New Testament.
2. Name the four leading classes of material found in the New Testament and tell in what books of the New Testament each is mainly found.
3. What two phases of the reliability of the New Testament are discussed?
4. Name three important evidences for the historical reliability of the New Testament.
5. Name two evidences for the reliability of the religious teachings of the New Testament.
6. State briefly the conclusion with reference to the reliability of the New Testament.
7. Give a brief statement of the relation of the Old Testament to the New Testament.
8. Name four elements in the Old Testament that made it a preparation for the New Testament.

JESUS CHRIST: THE AUTHOR OF THE GOSPEL

I. As Our Guide

1. His qualifications.
   (1) Humanity.
   (2) Perfection of character.
2. His method.
   (1) By example.
   (2) By his teaching.

II. As Savior and Lord

1. Jesus more than example.
2. Evidence that Jesus is divine.
   (1) His sinlessness.
   (2) His relation to the Old Testament.
   (3) His work as Savior.
   (4) His exaltation.
   (5) His pre-existence.
   (6) Conclusion: Jesus divine.

II

JESUS CHRIST: THE AUTHOR OF THE GOSPEL

The gospel as we have it in the New Testament centers in Jesus Christ. It is called the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 1: 1), or the gospel of God (Mark 1: 14), or the gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 4: 23). But whatever title is used, he is essential to the gospel. It is the gospel of God as God is revealed in Christ, or the gospel of the kingdom as God's reign is mediated to men through Christ.

Perhaps we could sum up his relations to the gospel under two heads: first, as example, teacher or preacher, and, second, as Savior and Lord or the object of faith.

I. As Our Guide

First, then, Jesus is our example.

1. His Qualifications

To be our example, certain qualities in him are necessary.

(1) *He must be human.* We do not, however, conclude that he was human by reasoning that he would need to be human in order to be our guide, but because we see him everywhere in the New Testament as a man. In the Synoptic Gospels the writers do not seem to make any conscious effort to set forth the humanity of Jesus. It comes out in what might be called an incidental way. This is doubtless because they never dreamed that anybody would question it. They present him as being born, growing as a child, obedient to his parents, having brothers and sisters, eating, sleeping, being tempted, and finally as dying. In John's Gospel and First Epistle there seems to be a more conscious and explicit setting forth of his humanity. Although divine, he became flesh

and dwelt among men, and they saw, heard, touched him; so that his humanity was genuine, not a mere appearance (John 1: 14; 1 John 1: 1-3). Paul presents him as being born of a woman, born under the law, as being a human mediator between God and man, as dying and rising from the dead (Gal. 4: 4; 1 Tim. 2: 5; 1 Cor. 15). Perhaps the most explicit reference to his humanity, however, is in the book of Hebrews. He took flesh and blood because he came, not to save angels, but men. As human he now sympathizes with us, and can be a perfect high priest (Heb. 2; 14ff; 4: 15).

(2) *But Jesus was not only a man; he was a perfect man.* As has been well said, he was the only complete man the world ever saw; all other men are only fragments.*

The New Testament presents Jesus as sinless. He challenged his enemies to convict him of sin (John 8: 46). He never manifested the least consciousness of sin, but taught that all other men were sinners and should repent and pray for forgiveness. Instead of manifesting a consciousness of sin, he claimed unclouded and unbroken fellowship with the Father (Luke 11: 13; 13: 3, 5; Matt. 11: 27, etc). One who claims such fellowship with God and never manifests any consciousness of sin must be either sinless or in utter moral and spiritual darkness.

If Jesus was not sinless, he can be no moral and spiritual guide for the rest of us. This is not said on the ground that one must be sinless to be a teacher of truth or righteousness, but on the ground that, in view of the claims of Jesus and implied in his conduct, he was either sinless, or he was more than an ordinary sinner. If he was not sinless, he was such an impostor as would make him unfit to teach or guide any man in moral and spiritual matters.

We should not think of Jesus, however, as simply being sinless in a negative way, that is, as being merely free from faults. He had all the positive moral virtues blended in perfect symmetry in his character. One who is not positively righteous is not free from fault. It is a fault not to be positively and aggressively good. Jesus' righteousness was positive in character. He achieved perfection through temptation and suffering. His goodness

*"Why is Christianity True"? Mullins.

was complete and positive. He had to oppose sin in the society of his day. He resisted the temptations to ease and sin that came into his own life. He became perfect through the things that he suffered.

2. His Method

(1) *Jesus is our religious guide, first, in his own character and life.* Jesus was an example in his religious life. He lived always in view of God. He was conscious of a divine mission. His one aim was to fulfil this mission. It was his meat and drink to do the will of God. He had perfect confidence with reference to the Father's care and guidance in his life. His was a life of perfect trust. He was a man of prayer. He sought the Father's guidance in the great decisions and crises of his life. He submitted to the cross in obedience to the Father's will and in faith committed his spirit to the Father.

In his attitude to men he was ever gracious and charitable. He manifested mercy and helpfulness. He said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5: 7). There was nothing pharisaical or exclusive in his attitude toward men. He called a publican to be his disciple and afterward chose him as an apostle. He often ate with publicans. His enemies brought against him the charge of eating with publicans and sinners. He answered the charge by giving three parables to show that God sought for the lost and welcomed sinners when they repented and came back to him (Luke 15). So in the gracious attitude of Jesus toward the erring and sinful we are warranted in seeing the attitude of a God of mercy and grace. We are commanded to be like him and thus imitate the character of God in his gracious attitude toward men (Matt. 5: 43-48, etc.). Christ was like God and we should be like Christ.

(2) *Jesus is our guide also in his teachings.* Jesus' teaching cannot be separated from his character and life. What he exemplified in life he also taught in word, and what he taught he lived. He is the only man who was all that he taught. But he was the perfect exemplification of his own message.

His teaching and preaching constituted one of the main factors in his mission and work. He constantly taught the people and preached the gospel of the kingdom.

In his teaching he appealed directly to the hearts and consciences of men. He brought a message about God and the kingdom that appealed to men. They recognized his message as good news and glorified God for what they heard.

As our example we should imitate Jesus and as our teacher we should follow his instructions. We are exhorted to suffer after his example (1 Peter 2: 20ff). He called on men to follow him. He was the "teacher," his followers were "disciples" or learners in his school. In the Gospels this is the most common designation for his followers.

II. As Savior and Lord

1. Jesus More Than Example

Jesus as presented in the gospel of the New Testament is more than a guide, more than an example to be imitated and teacher whose instruction we should follow. He is also Savior to be trusted and Lord to be obeyed. He is more than a guide or way-shower; he is the way. He is more than teacher; he is the truth.

Here is perhaps the sharpest issue in the religious world of our day. Is Jesus more than a man, or is he just the fairest blossom on the tree of humanity? Is he the Lord from heaven come down to lift men up out of themselves into the life and love of God which he embodied; or is he just the finest product of human evolution on the religious side of our life? Shall we reverently rise when he comes into our presence or shall we bow in trust and worship?

Here we need to remind ourselves that there are limitations placed upon us in relation to Jesus as guide and example. This is shown in the fact, pointed out above, that Jesus was without sin. He calls upon us to confess and forsake sin, but he never confessed sin. He exhibited a spirit of humility, but in his humility he never manifested the least consciousness of sin. The greatness of his humility lies in the fact that he could be truly humble and yet not confess sin. Humility in us would necessitate the confession of sin on our part. But the fact that he is sinless and that I am a sinner makes his relation to God and mine different. Christianity, there-

fore, cannot be summed up in the question, "What would Jesus do?" What Jesus would do and what I should do may be two different things. He calls on me to do some things that he did not do and did not need to do. Moreover, because of my sin, I cannot have the free, unhindered fellowship with God that he had. Simply to summon me to worship and serve God after the example of Jesus is to ask the impossible. I cannot do that for the simple reason that I am not Jesus.

We maintain that nothing less than self-surrender is what the New Testament calls for, and that it is of the very essence of the Christian religion to assume this attitude toward him. Anything short of trust in Jesus as Savior and worship of him as Lord is not the Christian attitude toward him. Nothing else is Christian faith. It is legitimate to begin with something less than that, but it is not legitimate to stop with less. It may be worthy of notice that in the Gospels, before the gospel message had been fully revealed, and before Jesus had been seen in the full significance of his mission and person, his followers are *disciples* or *learners;* later in the Acts and Epistles they become *believers*—those who trust him as Savior and Redeemer.

2. Evidence That Jesus Is More Than Man

Let us now notice some things in the New Testament that will justify the position just stated. Some facts about him cannot be explained on the assumption that Jesus was only a man. On the other hand, if we accept the idea that he is the eternal Son of God come into the world for man's salvation, they are all accounted for.

(1) *His sinlessness.* In the first place, the moral perfection of Jesus creates a presumption in favor of the view that he transcends in his being the limits of human nature. The moral realm is the highest we know, and for one to transcend the limits of our ordinary humanity here would create the expectation that he would do so everywhere else. A moral miracle is the greatest of all miracles and Jesus was a moral miracle.

How are we to explain his moral transcendence? Note two things:

One is that Matthew and Luke tell us that Jesus was supernaturally begotten in the womb of the Virgin Mary;

that he was born without a human father; that he was conceived of Mary due to the fact that she was overshadowed by the Power of the Highest (Matt. 1: 18-26; Luke 1: 26-38). If Jesus had lived an ordinary life, we would doubtless be justified in setting aside these accounts as unreliable, but the life that he lived would warrant us in saying that this was God's method of breaking the law of heredity in his case so that he was not subject to the same disability that all other men are in this respect. The virgin birth helps to explain the sinless life, and the sinless life makes credible the virgin birth.

Again, the sinless life is evidence of the fulness of the divine presence in the life of Jesus. In fact, to state that he was sinless and to state that God was present in unlimited fulness in his life is to say the same thing in different words; it is to state two aspects of the same fact. We sometimes think, in deistic fashion, that the presence and operation of the divine means the exclusion of the human; but this is not true. It means the realization of the human. The moral perfection of Jesus, then, is proof of his exceptional relation to God. It is evidence that God in him entered human life and history in a new and creative way. In other words, the sinlessness of Jesus is based on his deity.* If one admits the moral perfection of Jesus' manhood, he must in consistency admit more. He cannot consistently go that far without affirming his deity.

(2) *His relation to the Old Testament.* Another thing pointing in the same direction is the fact that Jesus is regarded in the New Testament as the fulfilment of the Old Testament order of things. He was the fulfilment in the sense that he was the full realization of the ideal values which found partial expression in Old Testament worship and institutions. Jesus said that he came not to destroy but to fulfil the law. He fulfilled it by spiritualizing its requirements, making them more inward and spiritual, as in the case of lust and murder (Matt. 5: 17ff). Paul shows that the law prepares the way for Christ by developing in man the sense of sin and failure. The law was the tutor or household slave to lead us to

*See MacIntosh, The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ, p. 412ff.

Christ. He came in the fulness of time (Gal. 3: 17—4: 7). The book of Hebrews shows that Christ fulfils the Old Testament priesthood and whole sacrificial system. In him men realize the cleansing of their consciences from the consciousness of sin in a way that the Levitical offerings could not give. Hence these offerings cease when Christ's offering brought cleansing from sin once for all and hence gave "eternal" redemption (Heb. chs. 9, 10). After his resurrection, Jesus taught that it was necessary that the Christ should suffer in fulfilment of the psalms and prophets. His resurrection also was a fulfilment of the Old Testament Scriptures (Luke 24: 44ff).

The fact that Jesus regarded himself as the Messiah, and was so regarded by his disciples, shows also the same relation to the Old Testament. Jesus regarded himself as the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. He was David's son as well as David's Lord (Mark 12: 35-37). In the triumphal entry he offered himself to the Jewish nation as their Messiah (Mark 11: 1-10 and parallels).

What shall we think about one who regarded himself, and was regarded by the New Testament writers, as the fulfilment of the whole Old Testament revelation? One thing at least can be said: Christians have always regarded him as the unity of Biblical revelation and its completion.

What has just been said involves the idea that Jesus Christ is the complete and final revelation of God. He not only taught men about God; he was the embodiment in a human life of the life of God. He fulfils the Old Testament revelation of God, because he was the full and final expression of God's will and purpose of grace to man.

(3) *Jesus as Savior.* The central thing about Jesus Christ in the New Testament is that he is Savior. He was to be named Jesus because he should save his people from their sins (Matt. 1: 21). Jesus presents himself as Savior. He does not simply teach men about the love of God that saves; he is himself the embodiment ond realization of that divine love. He said that the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19: 10). He claimed to forgive sins and worked a miracle to prove his claim (Mark 2: 1ff).

He gives his life a ransom for many (Mark 10: 45). He sheds his blood for the remission of sins (Matt. 26: 28).

In John's Gospel great emphasis is put upon the fact that Jesus is Savior. He is lifted up that those who believe might have eternal life. God gave his only begotten Son for that purpose. He came to save the world not to condemn it. He is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Those who believe on him have eternal life (John 1: 29; 3: 14-18, 36). The message of the book of Acts on this point can be summed up in the statement that his is the only name given under heaven among men whereby they must be saved (Acts 4: 12). Paul's message concerning salvation was given to the Philippian jailer in the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16: 31). He preached to the Corinthians nothing but Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2: 2).

But there is no use to multiply passages. One who does not perceive that the central thing in the New Testament concerning Jesus is that he is Savior has read the New Testament, if at all, with blind eyes. This is its central message. It is its universal message, the one found in all its books. He is Savior by virtue of the fact that he achieved man's redemption on the cross. He died for the sins of men. It is in his blood that we have forgiveness of sins and reconcilation with God.

(4) *Jesus the glorified Christ.* But the Jesus who is presented in the New Testament as Savior is not simply the Jesus who lived on earth among men, nor even the Christ who died for men; he is the Christ who rose from the dead and ascended to the throne of power at the right hand of God. Jesus died, but he came out of the tomb alive and manifested himself to his disciples on several occasions, under differing circumstances. They had not expected him to rise from the dead, and would not believe until they had convincing evidence (Matt. 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20, 21; Acts 1; 1 Cor. 15, etc.).

After manifesting himself for forty days under varying conditions he ascended to the right hand of God and sat down. He is now in a position of authority and power. All authority in heaven and on earth has now been given unto him. God has made him both Lord and Christ, this

Jesus whom men had rejected and crucified; that is, in the resurrection and ascension God has given him the position of authority and power that rightly belonged to him as Lord and Christ. God has enthroned him. This is evidenced in his shedding forth of the Spirit. Paul tells us that because of his voluntary humiliation and death on the cross on behalf of men, God has highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name. All created beings are to bow to him and acknowledge his sovereign power (Matt. 28: 18; Acts 2: 22-36; Phil. 2: 5-11, etc.).

Thus his exaltation means that all limitations of knowledge or power, or of any kind, that were placed on him during his earthly life have been removed. He is now enthroned as the Lord of the world. He is to remain seated at God's right hand until all his enemies are put beneath his feet. This will be at his second coming. He is one day to return to earth to raise the dead and judge the world. He came the first time in humility to save the world; he comes the next time in power and glory to judge mankind. So it is the exalted Lord that is presented as Savior in the New Testament. As Christians we do not simply look back to the Christ who lived and died centuries ago; we look up to the Christ who now lives and reigns (Matt. 25: 31ff; Acts 5: 31; 1 Cor. 15: 20-28).

(5) *His pre-existence.* In the writings of John and Paul it is clearly taught that Christ existed eternally before he came to the world for man's salvation. The Word was in the beginning with God the Father. After death he returned to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. Paul tells us that the Christ who pre-existed in the form of God and on equality with God emptied himself and took the form of man. This shows that his becoming man was a voluntary act on his part. Hence his pre-existence was clearly personal (John 1: 1; 8: 56; 17: 5; Phil. 2: 5ff).

This pre-existent Christ was God's agent in the creation and preservation of the world. Through him all things were made, John says. Paul says that in him all things were made, and in him all things consist or hold together (John 1: 3; Col. 1: 16, 17).

(6) *Conclusion—Jesus divine.* Could it be that these New Testament writers would ascribe to Christ such

functions as creation, preservation, and judgment unless, in the strictest sense of the word, they held him to be divine? Such a thing for a Jewish monotheist is unthinkable. John says plainly that the Word was God (John 1: 1). The most reasonable interpretation is that Paul also calls Christ God in Romans 9: 5 and perhaps in other places (Titus 2: 13, Am. Rev., margin).

Moreover, Paul regards Christ as Lord in the absolute and exclusive use of the term. There is one Lord in the same sense that there is one God (1 Cor. 12: 4-6). He assumes toward Christ an attitude that would be impossible if he did not believe him divine. He constantly calls himself the bond slave of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1: 1, *et al.*). For him to assume this attitude toward any being lower than God would have been impossible. To Paul Christ was no merely human being, nor was he some being belonging somewhere in between God and man. He was God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3: 16).

Moreover, even in the Synoptic Gospels, Christ claims obedience and loyalty from men that would have been absurd if he had been only a man, unless he were really divine. He demands that men put him first, ahead of father, mother, brothers, sisters, houses, land, even of life itself. When he called a man to be his disciple, he was not allowed to hesitate or turn back for anything (Matt. 10: 34-39; Luke 14: 25ff; Matt. 8: 18-22, etc.). Besides, he claims to forgive sins, a prerogative that belongs to God alone (Mark 2: 5). He also claims to be the judge of the world and the one in relation to whom each man's destiny was to be decided (Matt. 25: 31ff). On the assumption that Christ was God manifest in a human life for the salvation of mankind the New Testament facts are all accounted for; there is no other reasonable explanation of the facts we meet there.

Besides, there is no other way to explain Christian experience. In Christ men are conscious that they find the love of God. By faith in him they realize the forgiveness of sins, liberation from the enslaving power of sin, and such a moral renewal as gives victory over sin. How are we to explain this unless in Christ man comes into direct contact with God? How is it that regeneration by faith in Christ breaks down the wall of prejudice between Jew and Gentile, American and Chinaman, English and Japanese, and makes all men brothers? Why is it

that love to Christ makes a man love every other man on earth? In Christ one finds God as love and life and light and finds reconciliation and peace with men of every race and clime. Nothing else will do this for men. What is the explanation? The explanation found in the New Testament is that Christ is the personal embodiment of the life of God so that, when one comes to know Christ in spiritual experience, he knows God. He that has seen the Son has seen the Father. He that has the Son has the father, but he that has not the Son has not the Father; for the Father and the Son are one (John 14: 9; 1 John 2: 23; John 10: 30). This is the Christian explanation. There is no other. This view accounts for the facts. Any other leaves some of the facts unaccounted for, and leaves us in confusion and darkness. It is not a choice between the Christian explanation and some other; it is the Christian explanation or none.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In what two respects is Jesus related to us as he is presented in the gospel?
2. What two qualifications of Jesus as our guide are pointed out?
3. In what two ways is he our guide?
4. To be our guide what more must Jesus be?
5. Name five evidences that Jesus is divine.
6. Discuss briefly his sinlessness.
7. What is his relation to the Old Testament?
8. Discuss briefly his work as Savior.
9. Discuss briefly his exaltation.
10. Discuss briefly his pre-existence.
11. State the conclusions as to his divinity.

GOD THE FATHER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT: THE SOURCE AND POWER OF THE GOSPEL

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1. A God of perfect love.
2. A God of perfect righteousness.
3. A God of infinite wisdom.
4. A God of unlimited power.
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II. The Holy Spirit 44

1. A person.
2. Guided Jesus in his ministry.
3. Glorifies Christ in us.
4. Christ present in the Spirit.
5. Father, Son and Spirit One.

III

GOD THE FATHER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT: THE SOURCE AND POWER OF THE GOSPEL

God is revealed to us in the Old Testament; but we do not get the final revelation of God until we come to the revelation in Christ as recorded in the New Testament and realized in Christian experience.

Both Old and New Testaments also recognize the revelation of God in nature (Ps. 19: 1ff; Rom. 1: 18ff, etc.). But this revelation is altogether incomplete and insufficient. We do not get such a knowledge of God from nature as we need for our religious lives. There is nothing of saving grace revealed in nature. We get there some idea of God's majesty and power, but not a revelation of his love and mercy.

We might get at this subject by asking and answering a question.

I. What View of God is Set Forth in the Gospel of Christ?

To this we would answer:

1. He Is a God of Perfect Love.

Love is the supreme quality in God as he is revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Savior. The favorite term for God in the teaching of Jesus is Father. The Father in heaven, according to Jesus, is good to all men, even the sinful and unworthy. He sends the rain on the unjust as well as the just (Matt. 5: 43ff). He thus blesses all mankind whether they deserve it or not. He watches over his people and provides for them (Matt. 6: 25ff). He hears and answers their prayers (Matt. 6: 5ff).

The supreme manifestation of the love of God lies in the fact that he gave his Son to die for sinful men. He

gave his only begotten Son because he loved the world (John 3: 16). The love of God is manifested in that he sent his Son as the propitiation for our sins. Because of this we can know love as the nature of God and know him as the source of all love (1 John 4: 7ff).

Paul denotes this love of God for sinful and unworthy men by the word grace. Grace is the love of God going out after the sinful and unworthy, and seeking to transform them into his own likeness. This is the utmost limit to which love can go—the limit of suffering for sinners. Since God has thus commended his love toward us, we can rest assured that there is nothing good that he will withhold from us and that no emergency can arise for us that he will not take care of (Rom. 5: 6-11; 8: 32ff).

2. He Is a God of Perfect Righteousness

John tells us not only that God is love, but also that he is light, and that in him is no darkness at all. He gives this as the summary of the message that comes to us in Christ (1 John 1: 5). By darkness here John evidently means sin and evil, and light is the opposite of that. There is no sin or evil in God. His character is one of perfect, untarnished goodness or righteousness. This is why no man can say, when he is tempted to evil, that God did it. God is the source of all good and of nothing that is evil. Every good and perfect gift comes from him, but nothing that is harmful or sinful (James 1: 13-18).

God's uprightness of character, his uncompromising hostility to sin, is manifested in the Old Testament law with its demand for a righteous life and its condemnation of sin. This, however, is not the supreme manifestation of God's righteousness. God's final and uncompromising hostility to sin is seen in the cross of Christ. All the scattered rays of light in Biblical revelation come together in the cross on which Christ died to save men from sin. This cross reveals God, not only as a God of perfect love, but also as a God of uprightness of character and uncompromising opposition to sin.

3. He Is a God of Infinite Wisdom

Jesus teaches that God knows beforehand what his children need; therefore they can come to him with confidence (Matt. 6: 8). He clothes the grass of the field, feeds the birds of the air, takes note of every sparrow that falls to the ground, numbers the hairs on the heads of his children, and knows their every need (Matt. 6: 25ff; 10: 29, 30). There may be many problems that are too hard for the Christian to solve, but there are none too hard for God. His children can trust him with every problem, and cast all their care on him, realizing that he cares for them (John 14: 1; Rom. 8: 28; 1 Peter 5: 7).

4. He Is a God of Unlimited Power

The Old Testament teaches that God created the heavens and the earth, and the world is his possession (Gen. 1: 1; Ps. 24: 1). He rules, therefore, over all created things and the whole world is under his dominion. The nations of the earth are under his providential control and in the last day he will judge all mankind (Acts 17: 24ff).

This doctrine of one God, holy in character who rules over all the earth, is usually spoken of as ethical monotheism. It is distinctly a Biblical doctrine, not being found in definite form in any other literature in the world, except literature that is based on the Bible.

This God of unlimited power is everywhere present in his world to bless his children and to oppose sin and unrighteousness.

5. He Is a Person

In view of what has been said there is no question that the Christian view of God is that he is a person. By this is meant that he is more than a principle or a force operative in and through the world.

He is an intelligent, self-conscious being. He knows himself and what he is about. He is not a mere blind force that knows not whence nor whither. The source of all truth and intelligence is himself an intelligent being.

He is purposeful and self-directive. He has purpose and directs his energies to the accomplishment of his

purpose. He is not driven by some force outside himself nor within himself without his own choice or volition. He does what he does because he chooses to do so.

God is a moral being; in his activity he has respect to the distinctions of right and wrong. He who is the source of moral law must have regard to the distinctions of the moral law in his relations and activities. The source and creator of all goodness must himself be good.

We might sum up the matter by saying that the view of God set forth in the gospel of Christ is that he is a person, perfect in goodness, wisdom and power.

II. The Holy Spirit

1. The Holy Spirit Is a Person

Much is said in both Old and New Testaments about the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit. The Spirit stands for God's power present in the world working to carry out God's purposes. This does not mean, however, that the Spirit of God is simply an impersonal force or principle in the world. The Spirit is a person. This is revealed in the New Testament. For instance, Paul speaks about the mind or thoughts of the Spirit (Rom. 8: 27). He says also that the Spirit wills (1 Cor. 12: 11), and that he can be grieved (Eph. 4: 30). Only a person can think, feel and will. The Holy Spirit, therefore, must be a person.

2. The Spirit Guided Jesus in His Ministry

During his earthly life and personal ministry Jesus was completely under the power and guidance of the Spirit, and in this respect is an example of what our relation to the Spirit should be. The Spirit came upon him at his baptism to anoint him for his mission as Messiah and Savior (Luke 3: 22). He was "driven" by the Spirit into the wilderness after the baptism to be tempted of the devil (Matt. 4: 1; Mark 1: 12). He was led by the Spirit during the forty days of temptation and returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4: 1, 2, 14). It is thus evident that he conquered temptation in the power of the Spirit. He taught and worked miracles in the power of the Spirit (Matt. 12: 28; John 4: 34).

(8) Jesus was thus our pattern in being entirely subject to the Spirit in carrying out his mission in obedience to the will of God. As God guided him by the Spirit, so will he guide us if we are obedient to his will.

3. The Spirit Glorifies Christ in Us

But there is another side to the Spirit's relation to Christ. John the Baptist and Jesus both foretold that Jesus should baptize in the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3: 11; Acts 1: 5). Jesus promised his disciples that he would (1) send the Spirit after he should go away (John 16: 7). On the day of Pentecost he fulfilled these promises. After being raised from the dead and exalted as Lord and (2) Christ, he shed forth the Holy Spirit on his people (Acts 2: 33). His sending the Spirit was an evidence of his glorification and was one of his functions as the Lord of glory.

Jesus told his disciples that when the Paraclete came (3) he should bear witness to him (John 15: 26). He was to take the things of Christ and show them to us. He was to glorify Christ (John 16: 14). It is the Spirit's one and only mission to make men see, honor and serve Christ. The Spirit came not that men might see himself, but that they might see Christ. He is like light in that respect. The light does not exist so much that men may see the light as that men may see other things—the things of God's beautiful world. But the things of God's world are not beautiful except as the light reveals them to our vision. So the Spirit is the medium through which men see Jesus Christ. But without the Spirit's illuminating work, we could not see him. He is beautiful to us only as seen in the light of the Spirit.

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It is sometimes said that it is the work of the Spirit to make real in us the redemption that Christ wrought out for us. This is true. Christ achieved redemption for mankind as an objective historical fact. By the inner work of the Spirit we make that redemption ours. The deed of Christ as an achievement of redemption for us becomes by the power of the Spirit an inner experience of redemption. Christ's deed of redemption for the world becomes my personal experience by the Spirit's enlightening and transforming power. Christ's death for sin becomes my death to sin; his resurrection becomes my resur-

from tomb

rection to newness of life. This is why Pentecost follows Calvary in the history of redemption. It could not be otherwise. First history, then inner experience; first fact, then faith; first Christ, then the Spirit; first a gospel, then power to preach it.

The gospel way, then, is God's way of saving men. The gospel is good news. Salvation comes by hearing and believing the gospel. It is not the gospel, or the truth without the Spirit, nor the Spirit without the gospel. The gospel is the power of *God* unto salvation. God must give efficiency to the gospel, but God works by the gospel, using gospel means and agencies.

This suggests the proper place or function of human agency in God's way of saving men. It is God that saves; all the efficiency is of him, but he works through human agency and it is our place to co-operate with him in accomplishing his work of saving men. The fact that it is God's power that saves does not justify us in saying that man therefore has nothing to do with it, and that we will consequently hands off. God saves but he works through his people. Speaking of the Spirit, Jesus said to his disciples: "I will send him unto *you*, and he shall convict the world" (John 16: 7, 8). It is only as the Spirit comes to God's people, possesses and works through them, that the world is made to realize its sin and its need of Christ. The electric current produces light, but it needs a good medium through which to operate. The better the medium the better results produced. So God's Spirit needs a medium through which to operate in dispelling the darkness of sin with gospel light, and the better the medium the brighter the light shines.

In order to get men saved, then, shall we pray to God or preach to men? Shall we entreat God to save or man to be saved? We will only succeed as we do both. We must look to God for power, and then furnish ourselves as means through which that power can reach men. All our ecclesiastical machinery will get us nowhere unless it is charged with the power of God; but we must also remember that God does work through human organization and agency. God gives the increase, yet he does so only as Paul plants and Apollos waters. God gives the harvest, but man must cultivate it.

4. Christ Is Present in the Spirit

We might go a step further in respect to the relation of the Spirit to Christ and say that the presence of the Spirit with us means the presence of Christ. Christ is present with his people in and through the Spirit. Before he went away he promised his presence to his people even to the end of the age (Matt. 28: 20; cf. John 14: 18). This presence, of course, is a spiritual presence and it is realized through the Spirit. Paul calls the Spirit the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8: 9).

5. Father, Son and Spirit Are One

Taking this in connection with another fact, namely, the fact that it is only in and through Christ that we know God and realize his presence, we have another important phase of the doctrine of the trinity. Father, Son and Spirit are distinguished so as to show that they are personally distinct. Yet here we see that there is an underlying unity. The presence of the Spirit means the conscious presence of Christ and the presence of Christ means the presence of God. There are three persons, but one God—a trinity; but also a unity; a trinity in unity.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss briefly God's love.
2. Discuss God's righteousness.
3. Discuss God's wisdom.
4. Discuss God's power.
5. What is meant by saying that God is a person?
6. What is meant by saying that the Holy Spirit is a person?
7. Tell something of the work of the Spirit in guiding Jesus in his ministry on earth.
8. Tell something of the Spirit's work in relation to the glorified Christ.
9. What is meant by saying that Christ is present in the Spirit?
10. What do you understand by the trinity?

MAN: THE SUBJECT OF GOSPEL ADDRESS

I The Spiritual Nature of Man

1. The essential powers of personality.
   (1) Intelligence.
   (2) Rational affection.
   (3) Free will.
   (4) Moral nature.
   (5) Religious nature.

2. The value placed upon man in the gospel.
   (1) Evidence of man's value.
   (2) Danger of misinterpreting the fact.
   (3) Man's worth in view of his frailty and smallness.

II. Man as a Sinner

1. The nature of sin.
   (1) Defined as rebellion against God.
   (2) Implies knowledge of God.
   (3) Greater danger of greater light.
   (4) Perversity of will.
   (5) Involves guilt.
   (6) Consciousness of sin.
   (7) Final definition.

2. The universality of sin.
   (1) Taught in the Bible.
   (2) Explained by reference to Adam.
   (3) Objection that sin cannot be inherited.
   (4) Two things that are clear.

3. The penalty of sin.

IV

MAN: THE SUBJECT OF GOSPEL ADDRESS

In this chapter we are concerned with man as the "subject of gospel address." Man may be viewed in many ways. He may be viewed with reference to his physical frame and organism, with reference to his inner consciousness, his ethical life, the history of his life on earth, or a dozen other ways. We are concerned with man as a religious being, and more particularly as the one to whom the gospel call and invitation are made and as capable of living the Christian life in obedience to the gospel.

Viewed in this way there are two things about man that we need to give special consideration to. One is the higher aspect of his being or his spiritual nature; the other is his sinful condition and disobedience to God.

I The Spiritual Nature of Man

On one side of his being man is a physical organism. On this side of his nature, he is of the earth earthy. He is from the dust of the earth. His bodily frame is animated by a life that in many respects is like that of the lower animals. But man is more than physical frame and animal life; he is a spiritual person. Doubtless it is this aspect of man's being that is denoted when God said: "Let us make man in our own image" (Gen. 1: 26). In the image and likeness of God man was created.

1. The Essential Powers of Personality

Let us first consider what are the essential powers of personality. What are the elements in man's life by virtue of which he is spoken of as a person?

(1) *Intelligence.* One of the powers of man that constitute him a person is the element of intelligence. Man's power of thought and of knowledge marks him as a

personal being. This power lifts man above all other objects or beings known to us on earth. It distinguishes man from the lower animals. The lower animals have a rudimentary form of intelligence, but they have nothing that would justify putting them in this respect in the same class with man. Man deliberately studies the world around him, gathers information, classifies and systematizes it, and uses this knowledge as a means of mastering his environment. Man can not only know the world in which he lives; he knows himself in relation to that world, to other persons around him and to God the supreme person. He can turn his attention from his environment and look within at his own inner life. He can know himself. Moreover, man can look abroad, form plans, purposes and ideals. Knowledge, then, is an element in man's power of self-mastery and in his advancing mastery of the world in which he lives.

(2) *Rational affection.* Another essential element in man's personality is the power of rational affection. This distinguishes man from the lower orders of creation as much as does his intelligence. The animals have instinctive affection. Man's power of affection is higher than that. There is the rational element in man's. He forms plans and purposes for the object of his love as the animal cannot. Animal affection may lead to instinctive sacrifice for the good of its kind but the rational affection of man may lead to deliberate and sustained sacrifice and toil for the good of the beloved object. Man's love in this respect may be akin to the divine.

(3) *Free will.* A third quality or power that belongs to man as an essential of his personality is the power of choice or free will. As indicated above, man can plan and form purposes and ideals; but he can do more than that. He can choose between possible courses of action. He can direct the energies of his being toward the accomplishment of a chosen end. In this way he can master his environment. More than that, he can master himself. He can be influenced from without; but he is determined from within, he is self-determined. He chooses what he shall be. Man has free will. His will has creative power. He is not wholly determined by environment, nor instinct, nor heredity, nor by all of these combined. We cannot account for human life except as we take into account that originative force that we call free will. Human

history is very largely the account of the power of creative personalities, like Abraham Lincoln, that have arisen in the course of history and largely changed its course. One of the fundamental elements in man's consciousness is the fact that man feels, while deliberating upon a course of action where there are two or more possibilities, that he can choose either, and, after he has chosen, that he could have willed another, and that the responsibility for the choice made is his. If this fundamental element in consciousness is illusory and cannot be depended upon, then it seems questionable if man's consciousness in any respect could be trusted. Moreover, man judges his fellowman on the assumption that he is free and the business of the world is transacted on this assumption. Of course, man's freedom is limited, but nevertheless it is real.

(4) *Moral nature.* As a person, man has another power that is essential to his religious life and is vitally concerned in the appeal of the gospel to him. Without it, he would not be a "subject of gospel address." This is the moral nature of man. He has the sense of the distinction between right and wrong, together with the feeling of obligation to do the right and avoid doing the wrong. This is what is called the moral sense in man. Man has also the power of moral judgment; that is, the power to judge moral questions in general, involving the power to judge the moral quality of deeds and states of character, his own and others. This power of moral judgment is sometimes denoted by the term conscience. This term is sometimes used to include the moral sense; that is, the sense of distinction between right and wrong. Perhaps the term conscience in the strict sense of the term should be used with reference to the power of self-judgment, the power to judge one's self with reference to the moral quality of his character and deeds. There goes with this the sense of approval or condemnation according as one passes a favorable or unfavorable judgment upon self.

The moral sense is not something apart from his intelligence, his emotions and his will. It is the application of his personal powers to moral questions. It is mainly through man's moral sense that the gospel makes its appeal to him. It is through his sense of the need of reconciliation with God and salvation from sin that the gospel reaches him.

(5) *Religious nature.* Another aspect of man's personal life that needs consideration here is his religious nature. Man is essentially a religious being. This is shown in the fact that religion is practically universal among men. The sense of a higher power to which man is accountable is as deeply embedded in man's consciousness as the sense of right and wrong. Perhaps a closer examination would show that they are inseparable, that one involves the other. Man's consciousness as moral seems to involve his religious consciousness. One phase of man's religious consciousness is his sense of dependence and need. The preacher of the gospel does not need to spend much time trying to prove to men that there is a God. The sense of a higher power is a part of his equipment as man. Any man who does not have it is not a normal man. This sense of God may be blurred by sin. In that case one function of the gospel is to bring it out in its distinctness.

2. The Value Placed upon Man in the Gospel

(1) *Evidence of man's value.* In accordance with the foregoing view of man as a personal being, setting him off from and above all other things in the world, is the great value placed upon him in the gospel message. In the Bible man is everywhere regarded as the climax and goal of creation. All other things were made with reference to him. He was given dominion over all else that God made. He was to subdue the earth and replenish it (Gen. 1: 28ff). In the teaching of Jesus great value is placed upon man. Man's soul is worth more than all the world (Mark 8: 36). God watches over his children and they are of more value than many sparrows (Matt. 10: 29-31). There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels when one sinner repents (Luke 15: 7, 10). The gospel valuation of man is shown in the price paid for man's redemption. Surely it was not for a valueless creature that God gave his only begotten Son to die. Moreover, the dignity and value of human life is shown in the Christian idea of incarnation. The eternal Word, who was in the beginning with God and who was God, became flesh and dwelt among men (John 1: 1, 14). He took on himself flesh and blood (Heb. 2: 14). This shows something of the spiritual capacities and possibilities of man.

He is capable of fellowship with the divine and of indefinite spiritual development.

Again, the gospel estimate of man is shown in the fact that he does not live simply for the brief span of his earthly life, but on through the ceaseless ages. He is immortal. His life on earth is only the beginning of his existence. The gospel guarantees the immortal existence of man in the fact of the resurrection of Jesus and in man's fellowship with him as the risen and glorified Lord. In his fellowship with the living Christ the Christian is conscious of the possession of a life that is eternal and imperishable in its nature.

(2) *Danger of misinterpreting the view.* The foregoing view of man's value as a spiritual person may be misinterpreted, and sometimes is. It is sometimes interpreted in such a way as to deny man's unworthiness on account of his sin. Some say that the view that man is a weak, unworthy worm of the dust is wrong; man is not that kind of a creature; he is rather a being of infinite dignity and value and should so regard himself. He should not slink away as a moral underling; he should stand upright and assert his own worth in the face of the world, and if necessary before God.

But if we look a little more closely we will see that there is no conflict between the worth of man as a moral and spiritual person and his unworthiness on account of his sin. In fact, it is only the fact of his personality that helps us to understand his sin. It is the fact of his dignity as a person that makes his degradation so great when he sins. If he had not been elevated in the scale of being, he could never have fallen. The God-given powers of his personality constitute his dignity and his worth, and the prostitution of these powers in the service of sin constitutes his degradation. The higher one climbs on a ladder the greater the danger if he falls. Because of his worth as a person is he so unworthy when he sins against his Maker. The gospel regards man as of priceless value in the sight of God as shown in the price paid for his redemption; but it also regards him as unworthy as shown by the fact that his salvation is a matter of grace.

(3) *Man's worth in view of his frailty and smallness.* This view of man's worth is sometimes challenged on the ground of his frailty, weakness and smallness. Man is frail and weak when caught in the grasp of hostile ma-

terial forces. These sometimes crush him as if he were an eggshell. Besides, he is so small as compared with the vastness of the material universe. In the face of these facts, has not man overestimated himself and his place in the world? Some say that it is pure egotism in man to speak of himself as the climax and goal of creation, or to interpret the world as if everything were made for his special benefit. As to whether we shall view the world as centering in man depends on what kind of interpretation we are giving. An astronomical interpretation, for instance, would not center in man. If we are considering the place of the earth and the other worlds in space and their relation to one another, man may be given small consideration. But if we are considering ethics, religion or some other science dealing with moral and spiritual matters, it will be different.

To challenge, then, this gospel view of the worth of man on the ground that it is anthropocentric (that is, centers in man) and assume that this settles the matter is to beg the question. Of course, the interpretation is anthropocentric. But to say that the view is anthropocentric does not prove anything. The only question is whether or not we have sufficient grounds for giving the world an anthropocentric interpretation. The question comes down to this: Shall we make the governing consideration in our interpretation of the world material and impersonal forces or moral and spiritual facts? Surely moral and spiritual values are the only ones that we know that are ultimate. But when we come to the values of personality, of character, we have reached value beyond which we cannot go. No other values are ultimate and absolute. These are. If this be true, then man must be the goal and climax of creation, for it is only in man that we come to personal values. We feel that all other values can rightly be sacrificed for the sake of higher values, but when we consider moral and spiritual values there are no higher. We feel that these cannot be sacrificed for anything. If our moral consciousness can be trusted to guide us aright, then we are justified in holding to the value of man as a moral and spiritual person. The gospel view of man here is justified by the moral consciousness of man. A religious interpretation of the world necessarily centers in man, in moral and spiritual values.

II. Man as a Sinner

The gospel is addressed to man as a sinner. It is "good news" to him, because it brings the tidings of salvation from sin. Jesus came to save his people from their sins.

1. The Nature of Sin

(1) *Defined as rebellion against God.* Sin is rebellion against God. It is disobedience to the will of God. Sin is wrong-doing viewed as against God. It is a religious conception. It views the moral law or moral requirement as the will of God. Hence a failure to measure up to the standard is sin against God.

(2) *Implies knowledge of God.* This implies a clear conception of God and his will concerning man. Of course, this is not always present. In the lives of many men God is only a vague conception. But in the lives of all men, there is some conception of right and wrong, some standard by which they determine the right and the wrong. Sin, in the most general sense of the word, is wrong-doing; it is a failure to measure up to the standard of right. As the standard of right becomes clearer the sense of sin becomes more definite.

As we have an advancing revelation of God in the Bible, so we have an advancing doctrine of sin. Since in the Old Testament God is revealed in sovereignty, holiness and mercy, we have a rather developed doctrine of sin. In the Old Testament sin is rebellion against a supreme and holy God who has revealed himself to man. The moral nature of God is outraged by the sin of man. The law is a revelation of moral requirement such as brings condemnation on man because of his failure to live up to it. But in some of the psalms and the prophets we have an even more searching revelation of the character of sin. The law is more external and negative in its statements; the psalms and prophets are more internal and positive in their requirements.

The most searching requirements, however, we find in the New Testament. Jesus emphasizes in his teaching that God requires purity of heart. It is the inner state that counts with God. Sin is not simply the outward act; it is the inner motive and state of heart. He sums up the law in love to God with all the powers of one's

being and one's neighbor as himself. He sets up the moral perfection of God for our imitation (Matt. 5: 17-48; Mark 12: 28-34, etc.).

(3) *Greater danger of greater light.* The greater the degree of light and knowledge against which we sin, the more dangerous and deadly does our disobedience become. There are indications in the New Testament that one might so sin against light as to seal his doom before the day of death; that he might blaspheme the Holy Spirit in an act of unpardonable or "eternal" sin (Matt. 12: 31ff). The book of Hebrews speaks of a wilful sin that leaves no room for sacrifice, and John talks about a sin unto death (Heb. 10: 26ff; 1 John 5: 16). In each of these cases it seems to be sin against clear gospel light and to involve irretrievable doom.

(4) *Perversity of will.* Sin, then, is not merely moral weakness or misfortune; it is perversity of will. It is not good in the making; it is positive opposition to known good and the revealed will of God. It is not simply missing the path because we do not have light enough to see it; it is such moral perversity of heart as causes one deliberately to leave the path. It is "transgression" and "trespass," a deliberate stepping over the line that marks the boundary between right and wrong. Some say that sin is moral immaturity or weakness, that it bears the same relation to man's developing moral life that falling does to the child's learning to walk without falling. But sin is more than this. It is violating one's own sense of right and wrong, deliberately following the wrong rather than the right. Of course, there is moral blindness growing out of one's disobedience to God, but it is a blindness for which the guilty soul is responsible. It is the result of wilful disobedience to known duty. Such moral blindness is a part of the punishment of sin; it is a judicial visitation from God. By refusing to do the right one becomes so blinded that he cannot discern right from wrong. The castle of Man-Soul is darkened by the wall of sin that rises between it and God.* There is such a thing as the searing of the conscience for which the sinner is responsible. This moral blindness is something that comes as a result of disobedience, and something, therefore, for which man is responsible;

*See Bunyan's "Holy War."

not something which is the result of moral inexperience that moral lapses will dispel.

(5) *Involves guilt.* Sin as wilful disobedience to known duty, or sin against light, involves ill desert or guilt. Man is blameworthy on account of his sin. The degree of guilt depends on the degree of wilfulness in one's sin. The Scriptures clearly distinguish between wilful sins and sins of ignorance. This distinction is made in both the Old and New Testaments. Jesus recognizes that the people of his day who have heard his message and seen his mighty works are more guilty than the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt. 11: 20ff). It is the fact that man's sin involves him in guilt that makes his salvation a matter of grace on God's part.

(6) *Consciousness of sin.* The consciousness of sin is perhaps present in the hearts of all men; at least it is so nearly universal that the exceptions are negligible. But in many men it is little more than a vague feeling that there is something wrong with them and that they need adjusting in their relations with the higher powers. One function of the gospel is to awaken in man's consciousness a definite sense of sin and need in his relations with God. Paul points out that the law awakens a sense of sin and condemnation and thus the law prepares the way for the reception of Christ and the grace of God mediated by him. But even the law does not awaken the sense of sin and need of salvation like the gospel of the grace of God. It is only as man sees the goodness of God in saving from sin that he realizes his own guilt in sinning against a God of perfect goodness and love.

(7) *Thus we see that sin, in the Christian sense of the term, is man's moral perversity expressing itself in disobedience to a God of perfect moral goodness who reveals himself to man in saving grace in Jesus Christ.*

2. The Universality of Sin

(1) *Taught in the Bible.* The Bible clearly teaches that all men are sinners, that sin is universal. The psalmist in one place represents God as looking down from heaven to see if he could find a good man and he could not find one (Ps. 14). The very best of Old Testament characters, such as Noah, Abraham, Moses and

David, are depicted as having faults and needing the mercy of God. In the New Testament, Jesus teaches that men are evil, that all need to repent and be born again (Luke 11: 13; 13: 3, 5; John 3: 3, 5, 7). Paul gives a considerable argument to prove that "all sin and fall short of the glory of God." He makes this the background of his doctrine of justification by faith. All men, Jews and Gentiles, fall under the condemnation of God in that they have sinned against the light as God has given it to them. Sin and condemnation are universal, and condemnation necessitates the justifying grace of God (Rom. 1: 18—3: 20).

(2) *Explained by reference to Adam.* The explanation of the universality of sin is found in the fact that the first man sinned against God and the whole race sprang from him. This is the explanation of Paul in Romans 5. Paul teaches that the whole race sinned and came under condemnation in the sin of Adam. He does not give us any explanation as to how this took place; he simply asserts the fact. This view seems to be involved in the record as found in the first chapters of Genesis. In fact, it is involved in the whole story of God's dealings with man as found in the Bible.

(3) *Objection that sin cannot be inherited.* It is sometimes objected that sin cannot be inherited. It is said that one cannot be held responsible for his nature which he inherits; he is only responsible for what he himself does as a matter of free choice and self-determination. As a matter of personal guilt or ill desert, it may be granted that one does not inherit sin. But in the sense of a disposition inclined toward sin or a depraved nature, we do inherit sin. That is, we inherit such a disposition or nature as makes it certain that we should commit sin when we come to the age of moral choice. In this sense we are "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2: 3).

(4) *Two things that are clear.* Both the Bible and human experience make clear two things. One is that we are sinners by nature in the sense above indicated. The other is that when we act out our sinful nature, or commit conscious sin, we are responsible for so doing. How can we be responsible for sinning when our sinning is the result of an inherited nature? That is a problem for which we may not be able to offer a theoretical so-

lution that is entirely satisfactory; but that we are so responsible our moral consciousness seems to bear unequivocal testimony. On the other hand, the fact of an inherited disability may modify our personal responsibility for our sins. Also the fact of an evil race heredity may have something to do with the fact that we can be redeemed from our sins. We were created as a race. We fell as a race. Christ united himself to the race and died for it. It is entirely possible that all our sin and evil is provided for up to the point of positive personal transgression, and we might even say up to the point of the repudiation of Christ and his redeeming grace.

In accordance with what has just been said, Paul clearly regards sin as an evil and hostile force that has entered into human history and taken possession of the race. As such an evil power sin has extended its sway over the whole of mankind and the race is helpless in its grasp. The only power that can deliver us is the power of the grace of God mediated to us in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

3. The Penalty of Sin

It is made clear in the Bible that God punishes sin. Adam was warned that in the day he ate of the forbidden fruit he should die (Gen. 2: 16, 17). Cain was punished for slaying Abel (Gen. 4: 11ff). The flood came on a corrupt race. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for their sin. Repeated punishment came on Israel as a nation for her disobedience to God. Jesus warned men of impending doom if they did not repent (Luke 13: 1ff). They were warned of a hell of fire after death (Matt. 5: 22, 29; 10: 28; 18: 9, etc.).

The penalty of sin may be summed up in the word death. The wages of sin is death. This probably includes present spiritual death, or lack of communion with God, physical death and eternal death, called in Revelation the second death (Rev. 2: 11; 20: 6, 14).

As to physical death, one might consistently hold that it may be regarded as included in the penalty of sin. But when this is said not all is said. To understand death we must see it also in relation to the grace of God that saves from sin and as a factor in God's providential

dealing with man under a redemptive order of things. For the man redeemed by God's grace death is no longer a penalty. Paul enumerates it among the Christian's possessions (1 Cor. 3: 22.) To die is to depart and be with the Lord (Phil. 1: 23). To the Christian death is a blessing, an entrance into a more glorious life of fellowship with the Lord. In his case it ceases to be a penalty and becomes a means of entrance into fuller life. To the man who does not accept God's grace death is a penalty.

It is true, then, to speak of physical death as the penalty for sin, but this is only a partial view. It is related to sin but it is also related to the grace that saves from sin. It is a means that God uses to carry out his redemptive purpose. And this is true of all that we call natural evil—sickness, suffering and so on. Are these penal? Yes, but more. We must see them as a means of glorifying God in a providential order that is redemptive in its end if we would understand these. Jesus emphatically repudiated the view that all sickness and misfortune were the penalty of sin (John 9: 11ff). These must be seen as a means of glorifying God in saving men if we would understand them.*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Name the points included in the essential powers of personality.
2. What value is placed upon man in the gospel?
3. What is the danger of misinterpreting this fact?
4. What is said about man's worth in view of his frailty and smallness?
5. How is sin defined?
6. Why does this imply a knowledge of God?
7. What is the danger of possessing gospel light?
8. What is meant by man's perversity of will?
9. What is meant by guilt?
10. What is the relation of our consciousness of sin to gospel light? Is our consciousness of sin a proper measure of our sin?
11. How do we know that sin is universal?
12. What is meant by death as the penalty of sin?

*For a fuller discussion of the penalty of sin, see last chapter.

THE WORK OF CHRIST IN ESTABLISHING THE GOSPEL

I. He Overcame Sin in His Own Life

1. To save others he must be sinless.
2. His sinlessness shows that human nature and sin can be separated.

II. He Died for the Sins of Men

1. His death is regarded as a revelation of the love of God for man.
2. His death is a demonstration of the righteousness of God.
3. His sacrificial work is the ground of man's salvation.
   (1) The ground of forgiveness.
   (2) Moral dynamic in our regeneration.

III. He Arose from the Dead and Ascended to the Father's Right Hand

1. Proof of the resurrection.
2. General significance of the resurrection.
   (1) Significant as to our view of Jesus.
   (2) Assurance that death is not the end of life.
   (3) Pledge of our victory over sin.
   (4) Assurance of triumph of kingdom of God.

IV. He Intercedes for His People

1. Necessity for intercession in our sin.
2. Basis of confidence in prayer.
3. Guarantees complete deliverance from sin.

V

THE WORK OF CHRIST IN ESTABLISHING THE GOSPEL

Question: What Did Christ Do to Save Us?

In a previous chapter we have discussed the person of Christ. It was there pointed out that in the New Testament he is presented in two aspects as related to our religious lives: first, as example; second, as Savior. In that chapter we were interested with the person of Christ; here in his work. There our question was, Who was Jesus Christ? Here it is, What did he do to save us?

These two questions, of course, are vitally related. The person and work of Christ are really two phases of the same question; yet they may be in thought distinguished. We must in thinking of them, however, remember that we cannot know who Christ is apart from what he does, nor can we understand what he did to save us except as we remember who he was. The person must be interpreted through his work, and the work must be understood in the light of the person.

Our question now is: What did Christ do to save us from sin? We have seen that the New Testament presents him as Savior and Lord, not simply as religious example. Now the question comes: By virtue of what shall we regard him as Savior? By what act of his did he redeem us? What was it in his life that constituted him Redeemer from sin? In seeking an answer to this question we will keep in mind the fact that in the New Testament he is more than a man who is one with us in nature and life; he is also God's eternal Son come into human life to save us from sin. We are now to consider the question: What did the transcendent Son of God who became one with us do to lift us up out of sin? In answer to this question, the following things might be said:

I He Overcame Sin in His Own Life

We have already emphasized the fact that he was sinless and have considered the bearing of the fact on his person. We are now interested in the bearing of the fact on his saving mission and work. The question might be put as follows: What is the relation of the sinless character of Christ to his work in saving us from sin?

1. One Thing Evident

One thing is evident at once: he could not save others if he himself were a sinner. His sinless life is essential to his saving work. If he were not right in his relation with God, he could not make others right. No sinner could save another sinner. To lift others out of the meshes of sin his own feet must be free from its entanglements.

He would not be a sufficient example for us unless he were free from sin; and to be our Savior he must be our example. To be our example is not enough, but he must be at least that much, and his sinless character is necessary to his being our example. How much more is it true that his sinless life is essential if we are in any sense to consider him as an offering for our sins. Surely one who is a sinner could not die for the sins of others. The New Testament emphasizes the fact that it was the sinless one who died for us. He died the righteous for the unrighteous (1 Pet. 3: 18). Him who knew no sin God made to be sin for us (2 Cor. 5: 21).

2. Human Nature and Sin Can Be Separated

Another thing that the sinless character of Jesus signifies in relation to our salvation is this: It shows that human nature and sin can be separated, that man can exist apart from sin. The doctrine of original sin has sometimes been stated so as almost to make the impression that sin is a constituent element in human nature. The life of Jesus is a demonstration of the fact that such a notion is false.

Jesus conquered sin. He overcame. He was tempted. He had to fight for his sinless character, not in the sense that he was sinful and became sinless, but in the sense

that he had to resist temptation. But by resisting the devil and his temptations, he did maintain his sinless character.

We might put it this way: The whole race had fallen under sin. God set to work to deliver man. He began with Jesus. The character of Jesus was the only human character that has appeared on earth without sin. In his sinless character divine grace secured a foothold from which to work to drive sin and Satan out of human life. And the fact that God succeeded in the case of Jesus is evidence that he can succeed with others. The conquest over sin in the character of Jesus was a token of what God could and would do in other lives. It was an evidence that God was working to destroy sin and that he had now the first victory.

II. He Died for the Sins of Men

Here we come to the heart of the question of redemption. It is here that the Scriptures put the emphasis. In the Old Testament bloody offerings were the means by which sinful men approached a holy God and dared to hope to be received by him. In the New Testament, these Old Testament offerings found their fulfillment in the sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of men. Regarding his sacrifice, the following points stand out in the teaching of the New Testament:

1. A Revelation of God's Love

It is regarded as a revelation of the love of God for sinful and unworthy men. Christ died for men because God loved them. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to die for them (John 3: 16). He commends his love toward us in that Christ died for sinners (Rom. 5: 8). It is wholly opposed to New Testament teaching to represent the atonement as meaning that Christ died to win from an angry God his love for lost men. The death of Jesus Christ does not represent the effort of a third party to win God's love for men; it is an act of love on God's part in his effort to save man.

The New Testament regards this as the climax of love. No man has greater love than this, that he lay down his life for his friends (John 15: 13).

Christ made the supreme sacrifice, for he gave himself. This he did voluntarily. This was the thing for which he came; it was the end toward which his whole mission looked. It is true that the Gospels represent Jesus as shrinking from the cross (Matt. 26: 36ff and parallels). But his shrinking from the cross is not inconsistent with other passages that show that he voluntarily gave himself (John 10: 17, 18; cf. Matt. 26: 53). It was only a normal human impulse for him to shrink from death. To court death is an abnormal attitude. Yet Jesus did not shrink from death beyond the point of the will of God. The devil tempted him all through his ministry, up to the last, to do that very thing, but when the cross was seen clearly as God's will for him he accepted it in obedience to his Father's will. Christ and his Father were not at variance on this point. The Son came in obedience to the Father, and in obedience to him Jesus gave himself on the cross for the salvation of man. This was an act of love and obedience on his part, and was a revelation of God's love to men.

Christ willingly endured the cross in obedience to the Father's will, and his death on the cross was a revelation of the depth of the divine love for sinful men. This love was the love of the Son and of the Father; in this love for men they were one. The shrinking of the Son from the cross only serves to give us a glimpse into the depths of his suffering voluntarily endured for us.

The greatness of this love is also emphasized in the fact that Christ died for sinners. It was for his enemies that he died. This magnifies God's love as *grace*—love for the unlovely and undeserving. This is the greatness and glory of divine love. Jesus holds up this quality of the divine love to us for our imitation. Even publicans and sinners can salute those who salute them and love those who love them. But God loves those who are not good, those who sin against him. When we do this we are thereby manifesting the distinctive quality in Christian love and thereby show ourselves sons of God (Matt. 5: 43-48).

2. A Demonstration of God's Righteousness

Christ's death for our sins is also a demonstration of the righteousness of God. It was a demonstration of

the righteousness of God in that it was manifestation of sin in its real character as sin. It was a transaction in which sin was revealed in its true character. Never has any event in human history revealed the diabolical character of human sin like the crucifixion of Jesus. It was sin that crucified him. In crucifying the holy Son of God, sin showed what its true character was. If any man thinks that sin is just a blind blunder of human ignorance in its search for God and goodness, just good in the making, let him look at Jesus hanging on the cross and remember that it was sin that hung him there. But the paradox of history is that in condemning him sin condemned itself; it manifested its own true character. The cross of Christ was the judgment of the world and of the prince of the world. The world in judging Christ judged itself and revealed its true character as sinful (John 12: 31; 16: 11).

It is a law of the moral world that death should follow upon sin. This is God's condemnation of sin. In thus condemning sin he reveals his righteousness. It is righteous that condemnation should rest upon sin. Sin should not go unpunished. Jesus Christ in his incarnation and saving mission so identified himself with the race of mankind that its condemnation became his and in his death on the cross he endured its condemnation. His oneness with the race in death expressed his oneness with it in nature, sympathy and its deepest woe. He could not be one with man and avoid the most tragic phase of the experience of man. He identified himself with the race in every particular except that of actually becoming a sinner. He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4: 15). But for him to become a personal sinner would not have meant a closer and more sympathetic union with us in our sins and deeper suffering for us, but less. It is not the sinful who sympathize most truly with the sinful and suffer most keenly for them, but it is the pure in whom the power of love, has not been dulled by the drug of sin. He suffered the righteous for the unrighteous (1 Pet. 3: 18). It was the one who knew no sin who became so completely one with us that Paul says that God made him to become sin for us (2 Cor. 5: 21).

But is it right that the righteous should suffer for the unrighteous? Some say no. Anyway, it seems to be a law of life. Not only do we find in experience that condemnation and death follow upon sin, but we find that the evil results of sin are not confined to the one who commits the sin. Often it seems that the innocent suffer as much or more than the guilty. Now if we remember this law, and remember two things about Jesus, we can get a glimpse into his suffering for our sins. The two things we must remember are his sinlessness, or to put it positively, his perfect righteousness of character as a man, and also his deity. His perfection of character must not be thought of as a cold Pharisaical righteousness that separated him from all other men but as a perfect sympathy and love that brought him into closer sympathy with all other men. Then we are to remember that this sympathy and love were the love of God going out after sinful men. How much could perfect love, divine as well as human, suffer for the sinful? Take the suffering of the purest Christian mother for her wayward, wicked son, and we get some conception of the suffering of Jesus for the sins of men as he identifies himself with sinful men in their most tragic experience, the experience of death endured as God's righteous judgment upon sin.

Paul seems to indicate that it was a problem for God as to how he could save man without compromising his own righteousness, how he could be righteous and justify the ungodly (Rom. 3: 23-26). This problem was solved in the fact that he set forth Christ in his blood as a propitiation to be appropriated by faith. The cross of Christ is the highest manifestation of the righteousness of God. That cross manifests God's undying opposition to sin in a way that Sinai with its thunders of wrath could not. The cross shows that mercy with God is not simply the letting down of the standard of righteousness in such a way as to excuse man in his sin. Mercy does not excuse man in sin; it saves him from sin. He does not in the least compromise with it. This is the explanation of Jesus' shrinking from the cross in Gethsemane. He was not simply shrinking from physical death. It explains also his cry of desertion on the cross (Matt. 27: 46). He was so completely identified with man's sin that he felt forsaken of God. This cry is not to be

explained as a mistaken feeling on the part of Jesus that he was forsaken of God. It gives us a glimpse into the completeness of his identification with the sin of man and of the depth of the woe he endured on account of that sin.

Paul says that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (Gal. 3: 13). The curse here, as the context clearly shows, is the curse of death that comes upon man because of his failure to live up to the requirements of the law. We are saved from this curse, not by having the requirements of the law relaxed without satisfaction, but by virtue of the fact that Christ took the curse on himself. He endured our curse and thus redeemed us from it.

3. THE SACRIFICIAL WORK OF CHRIST IS THE GROUND OF MAN'S SALVATION.

This is expressed in many ways in the New Testament. Peter says that we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19). Paul says that it pleased God by the foolishness (in the eyes of the worldly-wise philosophers) of the doctrine preached (the doctrine of the cross) to save them that believe (1 Cor. 1: 21, Am. Rev., margin). Let us look at several phases of this matter.

(1) *The blood of Christ is the ground of our forgiveness.* According to Matthew, Jesus himself said, at the institution of the Supper, that his blood was shed for many unto, or for, the remission of sins (Matt. 26: 28). By his death he instituted a new covenant. This new covenant was instituted in the shedding of his blood and in this covenant men were to realize the forgiveness of sins. The book of Hebrews gives us this thought in a little more elaborate form (Heb. 8: 8-12). The Old Testament priest daily offered sacrifices that could not secure remission of sins; hence, the necessity of repeated offerings. But when Jesus came, he made an offering that once for all perfected those who were sanctified by it, and instituted a new covenant, one of the chief features of which was the forgiveness of sins (Heb. 8—10). Paul says that we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses (Eph. 1: 7).

These passages clearly set forth the idea that forgiveness of sins comes to us through the blood of Jesus. We have the same thought with reference to justification

and reconciliation. Paul says that we are justified in his blood, that we are reconciled to God in the death of his Son (Rom. 5: 9, 10).

We might sum up these statements by saying that the New Testament teaches that the sacrificial work of Christ is the means by which we as sinful men are set right in our relations with God. On account of our sins we were alienated from God and were under his condemnation. On the basis of the atoning work of Christ, upon condition of faith, we passed from under the condemnation of his holy wrath against sin and were reconciled to God. Through the blood of Christ we were made right with God.

We are not to interpret this to mean, however, that God was unwilling to forgive and had to be "appeased" in the sense of being made willing before he would forgive man. God was not unwilling to forgive. The parable of the prodigal son shows that. So does the attitude of Jesus toward the sinful and erring. The attitude of Jesus toward sinners was the attitude of God, and Jesus received sinners and was merciful and helpful in his attitude. Moreover, as previously pointed out, the death of Christ for sinners is an act of love on God's part. It was because God loved and wanted to forgive that Christ became one with sinners and died for them. Some conclude that, if God loved men and wanted to forgive, then no atonement was necessary. But John teaches that, because God loved us, therefore he sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4: 10).

To object to atonement on the ground that God is already willing to forgive is like the objection to prayer which says that God already knows our needs and desires to supply them, therefore, there is no use to pray* It is true that God knows our needs and desires to supply them; therefore, he has provided a means of supplying them through prayer or personal communion with God. Likewise, God wants to forgive; therefore, he has provided a means in the atonement of Christ for removing the moral difficulty to forgiveness. He loved, therefore, he gave Christ to be the propitiation for our sins.

(2) *The sacrifice of Christ is the moral dynamic in our regeneration and liberation from the power of sin.*

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*Compare Champion, The Living Atonement.

This would necessarily follow from what has just been said about the forgiveness of sins. The forgiveness of sins is a regenerative experience. When one realizes himself forgiven as a matter of grace at the cost of infinite sacrifice, he can never be the same man again. He is taken up out of himself and no longer lives a self-centered life. Moved by gratitude to God, he lives a life of service to the Savior. The doctrine of the atonement as set forth in the New Testament means our dependence on Christ for our standing before a holy God; it means that outside of him we have no standing before God. This is perhaps the point where what may be called the "modern" objection to Christanity comes out most sharply: the point of our dependence upon Christ and his sacrificial work for any standing in the spiritual realm, in our relation with God. But to take this element out of Christianity does not leave us Christianity; it leaves us a different religion. To remove the "offense of the cross" is to preach "another gospel." This is central and essential in the Christian religion. And to take this element out of Christianity is to take out its renewing power, its power to take men up out of themselves and face them outward in service to God and humanity. But when one puts his trust in the crucified Savior for salvation and realizes that because of what the Savior has done for him, a holy God receives him in mercy and freely forgives a guilty past, there springs up in his heart a gratitude and responding love that makes it a moral impossibility that the one thus consciously forgiven should continue to live in sin. He has died to sin and risen to walk in newness of life. And the ground of his dying to sin is the fact that Christ died to sin once for all (Rom. 6: 1ff). Paul speaks of himself as having been crucified with Christ (Gal. 2: 20). Perhaps this carries with it two ideas: one, that he died to sin and self, the other that his death to sin and self is grounded in the death of Christ. Paul again says that he glories only in the cross by which he has been crucified to the world (Gal. 6: 14). Jesus puts our moral renewal in similar terms. He says that if any man would come after him, he must deny himself and take up his cross, that is, die. This he must do daily (Luke 2: 23, etc.).

For us to be saved by the cross, then, means that the principle of the cross must be reproduced in our lives. If

any one claims to be saved by the cross while living a selfish and sinful life, he thereby denies the cross and puts to an open shame the Savior who died for him. The cross of Christ must be the power of our moral renewal and the constant inspiration to a life of service. Only when this is true does the the death of Christ prove to be a ransom having power to deliver us from the bondage of sin. We are exhorted in the New Testament to imitate the sufferings of Christ. It is only as we do so that we can have any assurance that we are being renewed in his image.

III. He Arose from the Dead and Ascended to the Father's Right Hand

The resurrection and ascension of Christ are so closely related in significance that we here put them together. They together constitute one side of a transaction, the crucifixion being the other side. The death and resurrection of Jesus should not be separated in our thoughts, as it is made clear in the New Testament that they are two phases or aspects of one redemptive transaction. The resurrection of Jesus is just as significant for our salvation as was his death, but it has not always received the same emphasis.

1. The Proof of the Resurrection

Since our interest here is not primarily apologetic, we will not dwell at length on the proof for the resurrection of Jesus. Yet it will be in order to give a brief statement as to the evidence for the resurrection.

It is evident from the New Testament that the disciples did not expect Jesus to rise. They thought when he was crucified that the matter was at an end (Luke 24: 11, 21ff; John 20: 24, 25). But it is also evident that they had such evidence as made them believe that he arose from the dead. He appeared to them under many different circumstances. He also gave them instruction which they recorded for us (Matt. 28: 18ff; Luke 24: 25ff; John 21: 15ff; Acts 1: 7, 8). They preached the resurrection in such a way as to convince thousands that he had risen. Moreover, their belief in his resurrection transformed them from a band of discouraged, disheartened men into

a company of aggressive, militant preachers, who, in the face of persecution and death, bore testimony to his resurrection. What wrought this change in them? What gave their testimony such power with the people?

Especially convincing is the evidence from the case of Paul. He was a bitter persecutor of the early church. All at once he changed and became one of the most zealous Christians and the most powerful advocate in the history of Christianity. What changed him? Paul himself has left testimony to the effect that Christ himself appeared to him, alive from the dead, and turned him around. Paul tells when and where it occurred (1 Cor. 15, et. al).

No other explanation ever given of Paul's conversion begins to account for it. If Jesus did not appear to Paul, what changed him? Morevoer, Paul names several others to whom Christ appeared, and says that at one time he appeared to five hundred brethren, more than half of whom were living at the time he wrote. If Paul's testimony was not true, why did not somebody challenge his statement? There is no evidence that anybody did.

Moreover, how will we account for the power of Christ in changing human lives through the ages if we are to regard this power as only the influence of a dead man? The people who are changed by him universally regard this transforming power in their lives as the power of a living personality. Is it possible that these people should be revolutionized by an influence that they have wholly misunderstood and misinterpreted?

Besides the transforming power of Christ in individual lives we have his uplifting power in human history. It is impossible to account for his power over the course of human history on the assumption that he died and henceforth exercised only the influence of a dead man upon the course of human events. Upon the assumption that Jesus rose from the dead and continues to exercise power over the lives of men as a living, spiritual personality, the facts of the New Testament record, of Christian experience and of history are all accounted for. Upon any other assumption that has ever been offered neither order of facts is accounted for, we are left completely without explanation. The only reasonable explanation is that Jesus rose from the dead.

2. The Significance of the Resurrection

The resurrection of Jesus is certainly one of the most significant facts in the world's history. In fact, it would be difficult to overestimate the significance of this fact for our general view of life and for our view as to the character and meaning of Christianity. So we will dwell for a while upon the significance of this event.

(1) *The resurrection and exaltation were significant with reference to our view of Jesus.*

They were a vindication of Jesus. Jesus had been rejected and crucified by men. He submitted to this ill treatment. As a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. But God vindicated him when he raised him from the dead and placed him at his right hand.

The glorification of Jesus in the resurrection and ascension was a reward for his obedience in suffering and death. It was because of his obedience even unto death that God exalted him and gave him a name that is above every name (Phil. 2: 5-11).

Again, the resurrection and ascension give us a universal, spiritual Christ, accessible to all men of all times, upon certain spiritual conditions, rather than a racial, limited Christ, belonging to a particular time and place. He was given all authority in heaven and on earth. He can now be with his people anywhere and everywhere even to the end of the age (Matt. 28: 18-20).

(2) *The resurrection also gives us the assurance that death is not the end of life.*

Men have speculated as to whether we live on after death. The resurrection of Jesus takes the question out of the realm of speculative thought and puts it into the realm of fact. Moreover, the appearances and ascension of Jesus give us assurance that, for those who die in fellowship with him, death is the entrance into a more glorious life. Not only do we live beyond death, we live more abundantly. He that liveth and believeth on him shall never die (John 11: 26). As death for Jesus marked the transition into a life larger and more glorious, so will it for us. The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee of triumph over death for all who are united to him by faith. This is true, moreover, not only in the sense that it guarantees our entrance upon a fuller life at death, but

also in the sense that it gives assurance of our resurrection, thus being the pledge of our deliverance from death on the physical as well as on the spiritual side of our being.

(3) *The Christ who rose and ascended is the pledge of our victory over death, because he is the power by which we conquer sin.*

We are victorious over death because we conquer sin; and we conquer sin only in and through the Christ who rose from the dead. He conquered death because he conquered sin. He rose from the dead because he had exhausted the power of sin. He met sin in a death grapple and conquered it. Therefore, he rose victorious over death. And we shall rise from the dead, because he conquered sin for us and enables us to conquer it. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus frees us from the law of sin and death; the rule or dominion of sin and death is broken in our lives when the rule or dominion of the Spirit of life is established (Rom. 8: 2ff). And the dominion of death is broken because the rule of sin is ended. The sting of death is sin, and when the sting of sin is extracted the power of death is destroyed (1 Cor. 15: 56, 57).

And sin can be overcome only as we are united to the living Christ. The Christ who lives forever, having conquered sin and death, the Christ who has the keys of death and Hades, is the assurance of our victory over sin (Rev. 1: 18.) If he be not risen, we are yet in our sins (1 Cor. 15: 17).

(4) *Again, the living Christ who conquered death in resurrection power and who reigns in omnipotence at the right hand of God is the assurance of the final and complete triumph of the kingdom of God.*

Through his Spirit and the preaching of his word he is gradually extending his kingdom and will bring it to final triumph. He announced his program to his disciples before he went away, and in the Acts we see how he works through them to carry out that program. He does not hesitate to use persecution to thrust them out when necessary. In the book of Revelation he stands in the midst of the candlesticks and holds the seven stars in his right hand and conducts a campaign against sin and darkness that finally results in the coming to earth of the New Jerusalem from God out of heaven and the complete

sway of God therein. Moreover, one who gives himself to this living Christ and the ends of his kingdom can trust him unreservedly with life and all, knowing that he cares for his own.

IV. He Intercedes for His People

The work of Christ on behalf of his people was not ended when he ascended. Enough is said in the New Testament to assure us that he is still active on their behalf. Paul makes reference to it, as does the book of Hebrews, and John assures us that Jesus Christ the righteous is the advocate with the Father on behalf of the Christian who sins (Rom. 8: 34; Heb. 7: 25; 1 John 2: 1).

The following points are worthy of consideration:

1. The Necessity for this Intercession of Christ Lies at the Point of Our Sins

An examination of the references will show this to be true. It comes out most clearly in what John says. He is our advocate with the Father in case we sin. Our sin, then, is the thing that necessitates his work as advocate. It is in his character as the righteous one that he acts for us, implying that it is because of our unrighteousness that we need him. In the book of Hebrews, we are assured that he saves to the uttermost all that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. This statement in its context shows that it is with reference to complete deliverance from sin that he wishes to assure his readers.

Here we need a word of caution. We are liable to make the same mistake that was spoken of with reference to the atoning work of Christ—the mistake of thinking of God as harsh and inaccessible, unwilling to receive us and show mercy until he is prevailed upon by a third party who intercedes for us. This would be a false impression. The difficulty lies not in the unwillingness of God, but in the moral difficulty created by our relation as sinners to God as holy. Christ is our advocate to take care of that difficulty. Christ as our advocate gives us assurance with reference to this difficulty. He provides for it. But he does so because God appointed

him as our high priest. God took the initiative in the matter. Christ did not make himself our high priest. He was appointed of God (Heb. 5: 1ff). God certainly was interested in our case or he would not have appointed one as high priest to act on our behalf and remove the difficulty made by our sin. The fact that Christ is our priest, then, does not mean that God is harsh and unwilling to receive us, and that God does not want us to approach him. The intercession of Christ does not mean that God is inaccessible while Christ is; rather it means that God is as accessible as Christ; he has made himself accessible in Christ.

2. The Intercession of Christ Is the Basis of Our Confidence as We Approach God in Prayer

The author of the book of Hebrews exhorts us to draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, on the ground that we have a high priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, since he has been tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4: 14-16). We can come with the assurance that we will receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need, because we have such a high priest to mediate for us.

3. The Intercession of Christ Guarantees Our Permanent Standing Before God and Our Complete Deliverance from Sin

John assures us that, though we may sin, yet Jesus Christ the righteous one is our advocate with the Father (1 John 2: 10). The fact that he is our advocate is our assurance that we will not lose our standing with the Father even in case we do sin. The book of Hebrews tells us that he saves to the uttermost all who come unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them (Heb. 7: 25). Here is the guarantee of our final and complete deliverance from sin and its curse. Because he lives, we shall live also (John 14: 19). Being reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more shall we be saved by his life (Rom. 5: 10).

If anyone should object to the discussion in this chapter on the ground that it does not locate the saving work of Christ in any one thing that he does, we grant the fact,

but do not admit it as a thing objectionable. The New Testament does not unify our view of salvation by making it depend on any one event, even any one thing that Christ did for us. Our view is to find its center and unity, not in an event, but in Christ himself. It is his person that gives significance to what he did. In him we find salvation, not in some event detached from him. He conquered sin in his own life, he died for our sins, he rose from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of God. He ever lives to make intercession for us. All this he did for us. In the complete Christ who did this we find salvation from sin.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What four things are named in answer to the question: What did Christ do to save us?
2. What two statements are made under the head of Christ's overcoming sin in his own life?
3. What three statements are made with reference to Christ's dying for the sins of men?
4. Give a brief statement of the proof for the resurrection of Jesus.
5. What four statements are made with reference to the significance of the resurrection of Jesus?
6. What makes the necessity for Christ's intercession for us?
7. What are the values to us of this intercession?

THE EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION THROUGH THE GOSPEL

I. The Human Side of Salvation

1. A knowledge of gospel truth.
2. A sense of sin.
3. The repudiation of sin.
4. Faith in Christ as Savior and Lord.
5. The consciousness of salvation.

II. The Divine Side of Salvation

1. God saves man in response to his repentance and faith.
2. God produces repentance and faith in the sinner's heart.
3. God saves in pursuance of an eternal purpose.

VI

THE EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION THROUGH THE GOSPEL

Introduction: Meaning of Salvation and Experience of Salvation

In speaking of the experience of salvation in this chapter, we mean salvation in the initial sense. While using the term in that sense here, we need to caution ourselves to the effect that salvation in the complete sense of the term includes more than is involved in the initial experience of becoming a Christian. It includes, in its general sense, all the riches of fellowship with God in Christ that will ever grow out of that initial experience. But the term is used in the New Testament with reference to that initial experience, and it is perfectly legitimate to speak of one who has come into fellowship with God in Christ as one who has been saved, as Paul does in Eph. 2: 8, provided we remember that the term salvation is also used in a more general sense in the New Testament. In speaking, therefore, of the experience of salvation in the sense of this initial experience of the Christian life, we must not allow ourselves to fall into the habit of thinking that in this experience we have gotten all there is for us to get in salvation. With this understanding we use the term "experience of salvation" with reference to the initial experience in which we come into fellowship with God in Christ.

We will attempt to discuss the matter in this chapter, first from the point of view of man in his approach to God, and second from the point of view of God's approach to man. This distinction may be difficult to maintain, but it is real and must be recognized. In recognizing this distinction, we might discuss first the divine causality in saving us and regard man's experience of salvation as the result of God's purpose and activity in

saving; or we may consider first man's experience in being saved and then see behind man's experience the divine efficiency in producing it. The latter is perhaps the better order since we are not so apt to see the plan and power of God operative in our lives until we look back upon our experience after we have had the experience. The former may be the more logical order, the latter is the psychological order, or the order of experience. We will follow the latter order.

I. The Human Side of Salvation

We will consider first, then, the human side of the transaction. Looked at from the point of view of the man who has the experience there are certain factors, one might call them steps, in the transaction.

1. A Knowledge of Gospel Truth

The first thing that is necessary is a knowledge of gospel truth. This can come through many avenues and in many forms. For most people reared in so-called Christian lands it does come in various ways. Under the best religious environment this knowledge comes as a part of the child's heritage.

It is altogether a mistaken notion, however, that says that, since this knowledge of Christian truth and Christian ideals is a part of the child's social heritage, therefore the child naturally and almost without conscious effort grows up into a Christian character. Christian character is not something that can be inherited (Jno. 1: 13). It comes only as the result of personal, conscious choice in aligning oneself with Christ (Jno. 1: 12), in the first place, and then of development or growth as a result of effort in overcoming evil, in the second place. The advantage of the heritage of the child is not that it unconsciously "naturally" develops into a Christian character, but rather that it comes into a possession of Christian truth, under Christian influences, so that in its early life it can make the choice for Christ and then have practically its whole life in which to develop Christian character.

But the point here is that a knowledge of Christian truth is necessary before one can become a Christian. The reason for this lies in the fact that becoming a Christian is a matter of conscious, definite choice. One is not a Christian by virtue of the fact that he belongs to a certain nationality, or family, or comes within a certain range of culture; but one is a Christian by virtue of the fact that he consciously and voluntarily assumes a certain attitude towards Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Jno. 5: 24). And being in this attitude is not something that is going to "slip up" on one without his knowledge or consent. Nor is it simply a matter of a certain attitude toward moral and social questions or values in general. Being a Christian is a personal matter, just as intensely personal as any matter in life can be. It is a matter in which one must choose; every one must choose for himself.

The fact that one chooses Christ and the Christian life carries with it the idea that it is a matter of intelligence. One cannot choose Christ if he does not know about him. As Paul says, one cannot believe in one of whom he has not heard (Rom. 10: 14). This involves the necessity for all the "means of grace," all those means and agencies by which a knowledge of Christ and his saving work is conveyed to man—the Bible, the church, the ordinances, the ministry, personal testimony and so on.

2. A Sense of Sin

One of the most noticeable effects of hearing the gospel, or coming into contact with gospel agencies, is that it brings to one a sense of sin. Where this does not result, the gospel message does not produce its normal and proper fruits.

By saying that a sense of sin is the effect of hearing the gospel, it is not meant that one who has not heard the gospel is wholly lacking in this respect. But before one is awakened by the gospel message this sense of sin is rather a sense of uneasiness, a sense of the "wrongness of life" as we naturally stand, rather than a definite sense of sin. But when one hears the gospel message, this vague feeling of the "wrongness of life" becomes a definite sense of sin against God. Preaching the law and its

moral requirements will produce this, but even the law will not produce such a keen sense of sin and unworthiness as will the message of God's grace in the gospel of Christ.

One function of the Holy Spirit in relation to men is to awaken this sense of sin in connection with the gospel message (Jno. 16: 8ff). Sometimes this sense of sin may be rather a gradual development; sometimes it may come to one suddenly. In some cases it is like suddenly opening the doors and window blinds and letting a flood of light into a darkened room; sometimes it is gradual like the dawning of the morning in a forest. It is more likely to be gradual in the case of young people who are reared under gospel influences and to be sudden in the case of mature people who have not been under gospel influences, when they do come under such influences. But it sometimes occurs that one who has all along been under such influences may all at once have a keen sense of sin awakened in him.

Of course this "conviction of sin" does not take the same form in every one. In some cases it may be rather a sense of utter condemnation and ruin. Nor does this severe sense of condemnation come only to those who have lived lives of violence and abandoned wickedness. It sometimes comes to those whose lives have been comparatively blameless so far as the standards of ordinary social morality are concerned. Some people would object to such a sense of sin as morbid and diseased. But we maintain that it is rather due to a true enlightenment produced by the Spirit using gospel truth as the means. The lack of such a sense of sin may be the really unhealthy state rather than the possession of it.

Of course the form and intensity of this sense of sin may be somewhat determined by personal temperament. An emotional temperament may manifest more intense feeling, a more "violent" reaction to gospel truth and influences than a person of more quiet and unemotional temperament. This does not mean that the person of emotional temperament will necessarily develop the stronger Christian character. Many times the reverse is true. But what we do maintain is that the normal and desired result of proclaiming the gospel is, in the case of each hearer, such a sense of sin as will lead to its repudiation,

3. The Repudiation of Sin

Repudiation of sin is necessary if one is to enter upon the Christian life. This is set forth in many ways in the New Testament. It is involved in the fact that Christ came to save us from our sins. He cannot save us from our sins except as we are willing to turn them loose. Repentance is emphasized in the New Testament. John the Baptist came preaching that the people should repent, because the kingdom of God was at hand (Matt. 3: 2). Jesus brought the same message. He told the people of his day that, unless they repented, they should all perish (Lk. 13: 3, 5). He commissioned his disciples, after his resurrection, to preach repentance and remission of sins to all the nations (Lk. 24: 47, 48). He said that, if one would be his disciple, he must deny himself and take up the cross (Matt. 16: 24). Peter at Pentecost and Paul on different occasions emphasized the necessity of repentance, (Acts 2: 38; 3: 19; 8: 22; 17: 30; 20: 21; 26: 20). Paul speaks of Christians as those who have died to sin (Rom. 6: 2).

The term translated repentance means a change of mind. This suggests that this change is one that takes place within. It is an internal rather than an external change. This shows that repentance is not to be identified with what we sometimes call "reformation," or the leaving off of vicious habits. One's life may be free from vicious habits, and hence may not need reformation. Yet this would by no means signify that he did not need to repent. All men need to repent, but one's sin may take the forms of genteel and even cultured and respectable selfishness, spiritual pride or self-righteousness (Jer. 17: 9). There are a thousand subtle and deadly forms that sin may take necessitating the deepest repentance, even though the outward life may be free from vicious habits (Lk. 11: 39). Jesus gave men to understand that righteousness or true goodness was a matter of the heart or inner life, first of all, not a matter of externals (Matt. 7: 15-18). This was the reason he told men that, unless their righteousness should exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, they could in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5: 20). These scribes and Pharisees were like whited sepulchres, outwardly white and shining but within

full of rottenness and dead men's bones (Matt. 23: 27, 28). Man's first need is to be made right within. This is done in repentance. Then whatever changes are needed in the outer life will follow as a natural result.

Repentance, or repudiation of sin, carries with it two things. The first is that the love of sin shall die in one's heart. As long as the love of sin is the deepest thing in one's moral nature no amount of resolution or reformation will make him genuinely righteous; and if he does not live a life of outbroken sin, it will be because of restraining influences of some kind around him. But when the love of sin dies within one, he will leave off his sins because he hates sin. One must hate sin as well as love righteousness. This is what the psalmist speaks of as a "broken and a contrite heart" (Ps. 51: 17). We have the expression of such a heart in the fifty-first psalm, as the writer pours out his soul in confession and supplication for cleansing and forgiveness. This is something altogether different from fear of punishment or a despairing remorse of conscience. These may be consistent with a selfish and self-regarding spirit; in fact regard for self may be the chief element in them. But when one has a "broken and a contrite heart," when the love of sin dies in one, he renounces sin, not so much because he fears he will be punished, as because he sees the true character of sin against a holy God. In that respect repentance is toward God. It is a revulsion of feeling in regard to sin in view of what sin is in the sight of God, and since seen as against him, in view of what it has come to be to the penitent.

The second thing is that repentance means a repudiation of sin by the will. It is a renunciation of sin growing out of and expressing this contrition of heart. One cannot hate sin and have a contrite heart with regard to it without renouncing it. It is this revulsion of feeling toward sin and the consequent repudiation of it that constitutes the basis and hope of all righteousness in the Christian life. To try to get men and women to live righteous lives when they do not have the spirit of penitence in them is like trying to build a house without a foundation. It is like trying to get pure water from a poisoned fountain. It is this spirit of penitence with regard to one's sin against God that gives the quality of

humility to the Christian character, a quality that is essential to true righteousness.

Moreover, this spirit or attitude of penitence is something that goes through the Christian life. It is not something that belongs to the beginning of it alone. The Christian life is a life of penitence. If the spirit of penitence and humility is not in one's life, he is not a Christian. One of the things that Jesus embodied in the model prayer was confession of sin (Matt. 6: 12). We can never get away from the fact that we have been, and still are, sinners before God.

4. Faith in Christ as Savior and Lord

Inseparably connected with repentance is faith in Christ as Savior and Lord. Repentance and faith go together. They are inseparable. They are not two acts or spiritual attitudes, but two aspects of one act or spiritual attitude. One does not repent and then believe in Christ, nor does he believe in Christ and then repent. Christ and sin are opposite poles of the moral universe, and one cannot turn from sin without turning to Christ as one phase of the same spiritual act any more than he can turn his face from the north without turning it toward the south.

Faith in Christ is more than intellectual assent to the doctrine that he is the Son of God, or that he died for our sins and rose again, or that he is the Savior of sinners: it is more than the acceptance of the proposition that God for Christ's sake has pardoned one's sins. It is not the acceptance of any doctrine, dogma, or proposition as such. It is trust in Christ as Savior and surrender to him as Lord. Nothing short of this is Christian faith in the full sense of the term. Trust in him as Savior and surrender to him as Lord are not two things, but one. One cannot trust him as Savior without making a committal of one's self to him as Lord of the life, in principle as Lord of all. Hence faith carries with it obedience. Obedience is not something beyond faith. The principle of obedience is at the heart of faith, is an essential constituent of faith. Obedience is the inner spirit and outward expression of faith.

Faith, then, is an act or attitude of will, in which one confidently commits himself to Christ for salvation and

yields one's self to him as Lord of the life. It is an intelligent act in response to the gospel message concerning Christ as Savior and Lord. It is a heartful response in which our awakening love goes out to him in gratitude for his sacrificial love for us. It is a response in which our moral natures go out in recognition of him as rightful Lord of the conscience. Faith is the soulful response of the whole being to Jesus Christ. It is more than an act of intellect or emotion; it is the response of the moral will, the center of man's being, to him in trustful obedience and loving self-surrender.

This necessarily implies that faith recognizes Christ as a living, spiritual reality. He must be to us more than a historic character who lived nearly two thousand years ago. It is true that we look back to him as having lived then, but we also look up to him as living now. To faith he is a present reality, not simply a post-mortem influence. A dead Christ cannot save.

5. The Consciousness of Salvation

What has been said about repentance and faith as the soul's response to the gospel message implies that salvation is a conscious transaction. Repentance and faith are the conscious adjustment of one's relation to God, especially with reference to sin. But there is not only this conscious adjustment of one's relations to God; when this adjustment is made, there are also certain results in the consciousness of the penitent believer that may be properly called the experience of salvation. All the factors we have discussed in this chapter may be in a general sense spoken of as parts of the experience of salvation. But in a narrower (and perhaps more correct) sense, we speak of the results in consciousness that follow upon repentance and faith as the experience of salvation.

This consciousness of salvation may be described in a variety of ways. It is a consciousness of acceptance with God. Whereas, one has had a sense of sin and condemnation, this is now displaced by a sense of sins forgiven and consequent peace with God. Often before surrender to Christ there is a sense of turmoil, what the psychologists speak of as the divided self; but after trusting him there is rest and a sense of unity within one's self.

There is a sense of relief from the burden of sin. Many times there is joy, sometimes intense joy. In some cases the experience is described as an inner illumination.

There is a great variety among these experiences. Some are emotional, sudden, tumultuous; others are quiet and more gradual. The consciousness of forgiveness and acceptance with God is not always clear and definite. One's temperament, previous training, and environment may have much to do with the type of his experience. But whatever variations may occur among these experiences, there are always present certain essential elements, such as repentance and faith, and a more or less clear, sense of relief from sin and of acceptance with God. And if one's consciousness of acceptance with God is not clear and definite, it is because his faith in Christ is also lacking in clearness and definiteness. Therefore, to come into a clear and definite consciousness of acceptance with God, one needs to have his faith in Christ clarified and strengthened. When that takes place, he is sure to have a definite consciousness of acceptance with God.

II. The Divine Side of Salvation

On the other side we have the divine activity in saving man. We need now to consider certain phases of this divine activity.

1. God Saves Man in Response to His Repentance and Faith

This is abundantly and clearly taught in the New Testament. There is a variety of ways of describing this saving act of God.

a. He forgives the sins of men. He remits them or puts them away. They do not stand any longer as a block to man's fellowship with God. The idea of forgiveness runs all the way through both Old and New Testaments, and is fundamental to the idea of salvation. Man cannot be saved from sin until his sin is forgiven by a holy God.

b. Again, God justifies the sinner. This he does on condition of faith, on the basis of the atoning work of Christ (Rom. 3: 24ff). This term signifies that the sinner,

hitherto under the condemnation of God on account of his sin, is forgiven and received once for all into God's favor. He passes into a fundamentally new relation to God. He is accepted in Christ instead of condemned in sin.

c. The sinner is also said to be reconciled to God (Rom. 5: 10; 2 Cor. 5: 18ff). This has reference to the removal of the sinner's alienation and opposition to God, carrying with it the idea of the forgiveness of sins.

d. God also adopts the sinner (Rom. 8: 15; Gal. 4: 5, 6). One who has been an alien now becomes a legally adopted heir in the family of God, carrying with it all the rights and privileges of heirship.

e. The sinner is said to be born again or from above. Jesus described it thus to Nicodemus (Jno. 3: 1ff). One comes into a new moral and spiritual life. It is being made over again. Paul says that, if one is in Christ, there is a new creation (2 Cor. 5: 17). He also describes the Christian as one who has died to sin and risen to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6: 1ff).

f. etc. These are not the only terms used in the New Testament to describe the sinner's salvation, but they are the main ones. They do not denote different transactions, but describe the one transaction or experience in different ways. And they all show that it is God that saves. God forgives, justifies, adopts, begets, re-creates us in Christ. He is reconciling the world to himself in Christ (2 Cor. 5: 19). Salvation is God's gift. The sinner receives. Faith is an act of submission. Faith is an attitude of mind and heart in which the sinner recognizes his own helplessness, submits to God and accepts salvation as a matter of grace from him. The attitude of faith is just the opposite of feeling that one deserves or earns or merits salvation; it is the consciousness of depending on another and his undeserved favor for salvation. The hand of the beggar, which he extends to receive a gift, does not earn the gift, it only takes what another offers.

We have already discussed the consciousness of salvation as a phase of the human side of salvation. God saves and imparts to us the knowledge of salvation. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that salvation is a conscious transaction. It is a conscious transaction because on our part it comes about by our apprehending,

by an act of intelligent faith, the grace of God extended to us in Christ.

2. God Produces Repentance and Faith in the Sinner's Heart

We have set forth that in response to the sinner's faith God saves him. But that does not represent the whole of the matter on the divine side. God not only saves the sinner in response to his faith; he produces faith in the sinner's heart.

We miss the mark if we think of the matter as follows: that God instituted or established a "plan of salvation," and published the terms in which he would save men; then it was left entirely to each man to decide within and of himself whether he would accept the terms or not; those who accept the terms God saves, those who do not accept he does not save. It is true that God provides salvation, that he publishes the good tidings through chosen messengers and gospel agencies; but it is not true that he leaves men uninfluenced to make their own decision. Preaching of the gospel is not a dispassionate announcement of the terms upon which criminals may be pardoned; it is a passionate appeal to men to be reconciled to God through Christ who was made sin in their behalf (1 Cor. 5: 18-21). There is not only the appeal of the human messenger; there is the convincing and drawing power of the divine Spirit. The divine Spirit gives effectiveness to the gospel messages that are brought to bear upon the sinner's heart and life. The divine Spirit convicts of sin, begets the spirit of penitence in the sinner's heart, and leads the penitent to have faith in Jesus as Savior. Left to himself, the sinner would not, could not, repent and have faith. Left to himself, man can do nothing good. All good thoughts, good impulses, good deeds have their source in God. He is the author of all good, everywhere.

So it does not adequately represent the matter to say that God saves in response to our faith; he produces in us the faith to which he responds. The mother responds to the confidence and love of her child; but she has brooded over the child in love to produce the love and trust to which she responds. If the divine Spirit did

not brood over the sinner to awaken in him repentance and faith, the sinner would be helpless and hopeless in his sin. Grace saves in response to faith, but grace must produce the faith to which it responds. A good teacher gives information to the inquiring mind of the student, but he also awakens and stimulates the inquiring spirit in the student. A lover rejoices at every sign of affection from his beloved, but he also uses all the skill at his command to awaken the affection in which he rejoices. When we look back on our experience we see that God loved before we loved; he sought us before we sought him. He led all the way; we only followed his leading (1 Cor. 12: 3; Eph. 2: 8; Phil. 1: 29; Acts 5: 31; 11: 18).

3. God Saves in Pursuance of an Eternal Purpose

But we must go further back yet. Not only did God work to bring us to himself; he worked in pursuance of a plan that is eternal. He did not suddenly decide to work for a certain man's salvation; he worked for the man's salvation because he purposed to do so from eternal ages (Rom. 8: 29, 30; Eph. 1: 4-11; 3: 10, 11 et al).

The doctrine of election clearly means that God takes the initiative in our salvation. It means that what he does in saving us he does because he purposed to do so. Our salvation is not a matter of chance nor accident. We are saved because God meant for us to be saved. He saves us and he does so on purpose. He works through the unceasing ages to carry out his purpose.

It hardly represents this doctrine fairly to think of it as meaning that God arbitrarily chose that man and that man to be saved and omitted this one and this one. There are depths within the divine counsel that we cannot fathom, of course. But the doctrine does stand for the fact that from all eternity God has had his heart set upon his people for good, and that through the ages he is working out his purposes of grace concerning them (2 Tim. 1: 9). But there is nothing arbitrary in his actions or purposes. Above all there is nothing unloving or ungracious in his attitude toward any man.

Whatever of good, including salvation from sin, comes into any man's life we recognize as coming from God (Jas. 1: 17). The doctrine of election is simply the

recognition of the fact that the good that comes into our lives comes as a result of God's purpose. He purposed all the good that comes to us. He purposed our salvation. Having purposed eternally to save us, he works out in time his purpose for us. His purpose is worked out in and through the social and historical order to which we belong. His purpose concerning our salvation includes all the factors and relations of this social and historical order, just as a father plans the education of his son, but plans it in view of the social and educational influences and agencies that are available or can be made available. God instituted the social and historical order with a view to our salvation. So God did not purpose our salvation as detached and unrelated units. We do not exist as such units. His plan for the salvation of any man is a part of his plan for the race. He planned my salvation as something that would be brought to me through certain social and historical influences and forces. His plan for my salvation is a part of his plan for my whole life; especially does it include all the good that I may do to others in this social and historical order to which I belong.

The great difficulty in regard to this doctrine is with reference to the non-elect. We do not have much difficulty so long as we think about the saved man and God's purpose in relation to him. But what about the man that is not saved? Did God not purpose to save him? It seems that here we will have to say that God did not purpose to save him else God purposed to do something which he does not do. God does what he has purposed and he purposed all that he does. He planned all that he does and does all that he planned. But the failure of any man to be saved is not due to the fact that God did not purpose to save him; but God did not purpose to save him, because he saw beforehand the man's perversity and unwillingness to be saved. God purposed in his case to do just what he does do, namely, to give him over to his own perversity and hardness of heart, to leave him in his sins. God gives the sinner up because he will not be saved, and God purposes to do what he does. God desires the salvation of all men. He wills not the death of any. He wants all men to repent (Ezek. 33: 11; 2 Pet. 3: 9). But there are limitations placed on God in his

dealings with men. He is limited by man's stubborn will. If any man is not saved, the blame is on him, not on God. God does all that he can consistently do for the salvation of all men. He is justified, therefore, in leaving some men in their sins. If he is justified in doing this, he is justified in purposing to do so; that is, in purposing to do so in view of the reasons for his doing it.

It seems, then, that God could not have planned to save all men without planning a different kind of world from this one in which we live. Why he didn't do that he has not revealed to us. Speculating about a different kind of world that God might have made is not very profitable business. This one is here and we will have to make the best of it we can. To say that God purposed not to save the man that is not saved because he foreknew the stubborness and perversity of his heart does not mean that he purposed to save another man because he foreknew that he would be willing to repent and believe. Election is rather God's purpose to make him willing to believe. No man would be willing unless God did make him willing. It means that all the credit for salvation is due to God. It is all of his grace and sovereign power. If any man objects that this makes us absolutely dependent upon God, we reply that it is true. The sinner is absolutely dependent on God. In faith he recognizes that and casts himself on God for mercy. And it is the refusal to do so that keeps the unbeliever from being saved. Nothing else keeps any man out of the kingdom of God—nothing but a refusal to acknowledge his dependence on a God of mercy and submit to him.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What five points are included in the human side of salvation?
2. Is a knowledge of gospel truth necessary to becoming a Christian? Why?
3. What is the relation of a knowledge of gospel truth to the sense of sin?
4. What is meant by a repudiation of sin?
5. What is meant by faith in Christ?
6. What is meant by the consciousness of salvation?
7. What does God do in response to man's repentance and faith?
8. What is God's relation to man's repentance and faith?
9. What is the relation of God's purpose to our salvation?

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VII

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER: THE FRUIT OF THE GOSPEL

Somtimes Christian truth has been presented in such a way as to make the impression that conversion, or turning from sin to Christ, was all there was to the Christian life. Dr. Gambrell once said that this was the end of the matter, but that it was the first end. Conversion is only the beginning of the Christian life. Nor is conversion the whole of salvation. Salvation includes everything that grows out of conversion, everything out to the resurrection.

Some denominations, including Baptists, that have emphasized the necessity of conversion have not placed the needed emphasis on growth in grace and the development of Christian character; while some other denominations have emphasized instruction and training and have overlooked or discarded the doctrine of conscious conversion. A religious program that overlooks either one of these will fail largely to produce the best results; and fortunately the situation among Baptists is rapidly changing in this respect for the better.

Christian character begins in regeneration. But more is needed than regeneration. Regeneration can hardly be called the production of Christian character. It is only a beginning. Regeneration is the planting of the seed, the growing of the stalk with the grain must follow. Or to change the figure, regeneration is laying the foundation. The house must be built on this foundation. To come back to the idea of birth, when we are regenerated, we are only "babes" in Christ. To become full grown men we must grow, we must develop.

I. Conditions of Growth in Christian Character

Since there is such imperative need of development in Christian character, the next question that would arise is this: Is there anything that the regenerated man can do to cause himself to develop in the Christian life? If so, what is it? On what condition or conditions will he develop in the graces of Christian character?

1. The Causal Power, God's Spirit

We need to remember here that the only power that can produce Christian character is the Spirit of God. The universal law in the kingdom of God is that Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God must give the increase (1 Cor. 3: 6). The efficiency here is of God, just as much so as in regeneration. I can no more make myself grow in the Christian life without God than I could bring myself into the kingdom without him. My dependence in each case must be entirely on him.

And this is one difference between Christian character and non-Christian morality. In the nature of the case, the Christian is conscious of his dependence on Christ for all his goodness. This brings in the element of humility as an essential in Christian character. If it does not have this element, it is not Christian. Too often with the non-Christian there is the spirit of proud self-righteousness. The non-Christian who is "a good moral man," in the ordinary acceptation of the term, generally wants you to give him full credit for the fact. His goodness is self-conscious goodness; and self-conscious goodness is not goodness. Even the sinless Jesus was "meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11: 29). He did not parade his own goodness. He left that to the Pharisees.

So when we begin to inquire about how we are to grow in grace, the first thing we will recognize is that God and God alone can make us to develop in Christian character. The same power that makes us Christians must cause us to develop as Christians: the same power that regenerates must progressively sanctify.

2. Growth Conditional Upon Christian Effort

We are not to infer, however, that growth in Christian character is unconditional on the human side. Justifica-

tion and regeneration are the work of God. Yet they are not unconditional; they are conditioned on our repentance and faith. So with reference to growth. The causal efficiency is of God, yet this power of God does not work irrespective of human conditions. In other words, we must distinguish between growth in the moral realm and in the non-moral or sub-moral realm. The point has sometimes been made that one cannot make himself grow any more than he can lift himself over the fence by his own bootstraps. If by this is meant that the power for developing Christian character is of God, and that we must depend on him for grace to grow, then with this we would heartily agree. But if by the statement is meant that we have no more to do with our own development in the Christian life than the tree or pig does with its growth, then we cannot agree. In moral and spiritual growth we are dealing with personality and personality is rational and self-determining. Man does have something to do with his own moral and spiritual advancement. His own attitude and efforts have all to do with his moral and spiritual development.

The relations between the divine and human factors in the Christian life are brought out by Paul when he exhorts the Philippians: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2: 12, 13). Paul here ascribes all the causal efficiency to God, both in willing and working, in stirring up desire and aspiration for Christian advancement and in its effectuation in life and attainment: all desire for goodness and righteousness and all achievement of goodness and righteousness are due to the initiating and completing grace of God. Yet we are not therefore to sit down in sloth and indifference. We are rather to yield to his grace and co-operate with his working to carry out his will. We cannot run ahead of him in goodness; we ought not to lag behind the movings of his Spirit. We need to recognize our dependence on him and work with him to do his will. Our dependence on him is not an encouragement to sloth in spiritual attainment, nor a discouragement of effort; it is rather the assurance of success if we strive for the attainment of righteousness in line with his energizing power within us.

3. Increasing Faith, the All-Inclusive Condition

Perhaps one might mention faith as the most inclusive and essential condition of development in Christian character. If we use faith as including repentance, as we might legitimately do, then it would be correct to say that faith includes every condition of growth in Christian character. Bible reading, preaching and the other things mentioned hereafter are only means for developing faith; while prayer, obedience and Christian activities are only expressions of faith or factors in it.

We can readily see that faith is the all-inclusive condition of growth in the Christian life if we recall what was said above to the effect that the causal efficiency was altogether of God. If the efficiency is of God, then the condition on our part corresponding to the divine efficiency and appropriating the divine power is faith. Faith is the medium or condition through which the divine power increasingly works in our lives. It is the principle of receptivity, or appropriation, of submission and obedience. As our faith grows, then, God can work more effectively in our lives; his power increasingly works to transform and develop us into his own likeness.

Faith may be truly called the germinal grace in the Christian life. Faith contains in itself the elements of obedience, of hope, endurance or patience, of love, and all the excellencies of the Christian type of character. It is the germinal Christian grace because it is the principle by which we are united to Christ, and all our goodness comes from him. An increasing faith, then, is the one all-inclusive condition of development in Christian character.

4. Some Special Conditions of Growth

Let us now consider some of the more specific conditions of growth or development in the Christian life. According to what has been said about faith, anything that strengthens our faith strengthens us in Christian character. So the conditions that are hereafter mentioned may be considered either as means or conditions of developing our faith.

It is difficult to name and discuss them all without writing a treatise on practical Christian ethics. We will name some of the more important ones.

(1) *Study of the Bible and other Christian literature.* It goes without saying that a Christian ought to study his Bible regularly. Many a man who would throw up his hands in horror if his son coming home from college should question the truthfulness of any part of the Bible yet will himself let his Bible lie unread in his home week after week and month after month. Our real love for the Bible and its teachings is shown, not so much by our professions concerning it, as by our reading of it and our obedience to its teachings. It cannot very well be a lamp to our pathway and a guide to our feet unless we know its teachings.

The Christian should read also other Christian literature—religious newspapers and journals, giving news concerning the organized Christian activities of today and containing devotional and doctrinal discussions; and books of a religious nature.

Here lies the importance of the work of the Sunday school and other teaching agencies in the church. We cannot expect the lives of Christian people to go beyond the degree of their intelligence. It is a hopeful sign that the teaching idea is being taken seriously in our churches and that they are making more adequate provision for giving the people real instruction in the Bible and religious matters.

(2) *Attendance upon the preaching of the word and public worship.* Attendance upon the preaching of the word is important both as a means of instruction and of stimulation to right living. Good preaching informs and inspires. And nothing can take the place of preaching in bringing men to a saving knowledge of Christ and in building them up in the Christian life. Private reading of the Bible will not take the place of the public preaching of the word. In the public preaching of the word you have a soul that is on fire with the love of God and men expounding gospel truth to his fellowmen and pressing home its claims to their hearts and consciences. You have the creative power of personality brought to bear on personality. Dr. Gambrell said that good teaching was one-tenth information and nine-tenths inspiration. That

is still more true of good preaching. The main element in good preaching is the inspirational element. For that reason it is indispensable in building Christian character.

b. Another important factor is public worship. Private devotion is indispensable, but cannot take the place of public worship in which the whole congregation in song and praise and prayer draws near to worship God. Here we receive inspiration and power for the temptations and trials that are later sure to come.

(3) *Opposition to sin.* If one is to grow in Christian character there must be a growing sensitiveness to sin and increasing opposition to it. Especially should one's conscience become more and more sensitive to sin in one's a. own life. One's moral sense should become more and more trained to discern good and evil and increasingly positive in the repudiation of sin. It is no sign that one is becoming more Christ-like in character if he can increasingly commit sin and not be disturbed in conscience by it.

One also grows in strength of character by striving b. against sin in the social order around him. This does not mean that one is constantly to be carrying "a chip on his shoulder" or looking for a fight. But it does mean that wisely and in the spirit of the Master he is to oppose evil and not to compromise with it, and that he is to strive to overcome evil and break its power in the social order. If necessary, the Christian should strive unto blood in resisting evil, and by so doing he grows in strength of character.

(4) *Prayer.* One of the most important factors in the development of faith and Christian character is prayer. Public prayer has been mentioned as an element in public worship, and we are thinking here more especially about individual or secret prayer. Perhaps there is no better test of the sincerity and genuineness of one's religion than secret prayer. Jesus emphasized it by precept and example. In fact the Bible is full of it.

In public worship or prayer one is more or less conscious of others around him, and he may go through the form of worship or the words of prayer to keep up appearances or to conform to custom. But when one comes alone with God, then there is no occasion for show and not much temptation to hypocrisy. One is then likely to

get down to first-hand dealing with God or soon cease to go through the form of praying. By this we do not mean that our private praying always has in it the reality that it should have, but it is more likely to have than public prayer and less likely to have formalism and vain repetition.

Let us consider some ways in which prayer contributes to the growth of Christian character.

a. In the first place, it makes God and spiritual things more real to the soul. One is not likely to be seriously troubled with religious doubts about God and spiritual matters so long as he maintains a vigorous prayer life. He may have intellectual questions about some of these things, but as long as he maintains first-hand dealings with God in spiritual communion, God will remain to him a reality. And the reality and power of the prayer life can be maintained in spite of intellectual questionings and searchings. To the man who prays God is not a theory or doctrine merely but a living reality. Thus the praying soul is strengthened because it is stayed on God.

b. Prayer also develops character in that it causes one to search his own heart for sin and leads him to see his own defects and faults. Nothing will lead a man to see his own sins and failures like a conscious approach to God. Conscious sin will block our approach to God until it is confessed and repudiated. Prayer, therefore, is a great purifier of heart and life.

c. Another way in which prayer contributes to the development of Christian character is that it brings more of the spirit of the Master into our hearts, and, therefore, makes us more like him. Prayer is communion with God. Communion with God in Christ makes us more like God as revealed in Christ. It brings into our hearts more of his holiness, his love, his compassion for sinful and helpless humanity. Especially is this true of intercessory prayer in which we strive to bring spiritual blessings into the lives of others. Intercessory prayer expresses and strengthens the spirit of Christ within us.

(5) *Obedience.* If we are to grow in the Christian life, there must be in our lives the spirit of obedience to God's will. We need not only to read the Bible and pray to know the truth; we must also be ready to do the truth as

we come to know it. Christian truth is something more than a system of doctrine to be accepted by the intellect; it is a program to be carried out in active service. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6: 17). It is our sword also by which we are to conquer the enemies of Christ and righteousness.

The spirit of obedience is necessary to our understanding of Christian truth. He that wills to do the will of God shall know of the doctrine (Jno. 7: 17). From him that hath not shall be taken away that which he has (Matt. 13: 12). This latter statement does not mean that God arbitrarily cuts anybody off from the truth or darkens the mind because he delights in their moral blindness. It means that it is a law of the moral and spiritual world that what we do not use we lose. God does not waste his best gifts on those who abuse them. We are absolutely dependent on him for a knowledge of truth and he can give only as we are in the right attitude to receive.

Obedience to God's will as we come to know that will is the natural result, or expression of faith. In fact it can hardly be called a result as if it were something beyond faith and added to it; it is rather an element in faith. Surrender of self to Christ is an essential element in faith. Hence obedience is just the expression and development of faith. James insists that works as well as faith are necessary to justification; but a careful reading will show that he is not thinking of works and faith as two things; but what he is insisting on is that one must have a living faith that expresses itself in deeds, not mere profession. He is showing what kind of faith it is that justifies, and he shows that it is a faith that produces a life of practical righteousness, that it is not a matter of mere words (Jas. 2: 14ff). And as faith works it grows, just as the muscles of the body develop by exercise.

Another phase of the Christian's obedience may be considered in relation to his development. It is the Christian's attitude toward God's providential dealings with him. For one thing, he should recognize that there is such a thing as a providential order of the world. He should be able to recognize the hand of God in his own life. And in the events that come he should have the

spirit of humility and trust in God. He should recognize that whatever comes into his life is intended of God to make him more Christ-like in character. All things are ordered of God for that one end; and if we receive his providential dealings in the spirit of trust and obedience to his will, all things will work for our good in making us to be conformed to the image of his Son. God does not order all things for our ease, or pleasure, or temporal good, but that we may be made like Christ in character (Rom. 8: 28, 29).

(6) *Christian activity.* Another thing that will make us to develop in Christian character is active Christian service. As noted in the last section, Christian activity is just the expression of faith, and results in the development of faith. Religious activity does not make one a Christian, but Christian faith will express itself in Christian activity.

Here lies the necessity of giving young Christians stimulation, guidance and training in Christian service. The motive for all service lies in our faith in Christ and our devotion to him, but this does not obviate the necessity for training in Christian service and activity. Many Christians would like to do something in Christian service but do not know what to do nor where to lay hold. The one who helps them get well started is a great benefactor.

It would be out of the question to try to name here all the forms that service may take. It may include any form of rendering help to needy humanity. Service to man in any way in the name and spirit of Christ is service to God. Especially should all Christians help in spreading the gospel message to all men, in evangelizing those immediately about them, and give of their means to support the cause of Christ.

Of course to get the most in the way of development out of Christian activity, it should be done from a motive of love to Christ and love to man. One should engage in religious activity not merely because he wants to do something religious nor simply for the sake of getting development out of it. The more completely one can forget self in sacrificial service to others the more will he become like Christ in character and life. Only as the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies does it grow and mul-

tiply (Jno. 12: 24). Only as we lose our lives for Christ's sake and the gospel's do we save them (Mark 8: 35).

II. The Question of Perseverance

Perhaps at this point we should consider the question of what is called the "perseverance of the saints." Over against this is what is popularly called "falling from grace."

1. Meaning of Perseverance

First, it is necessary to get clearly before our minds what is meant by the perseverance of the saints. Oftentimes the objections to a doctrine grow out of a misapprehension of what the doctrine means. It often happens that the objector is not objecting to the doctrine itself, but to his own perverted idea of the doctrine. In other words, it is often true that the advocate of a doctrine is thinking about one thing and the objector another, and they fail to get together, because they are thinking about different things.

This doctrine does not mean that all professing Christians will finally be saved. This is made clear by the New Testament. Many professing Christians are like the seed that fell on stony ground; they fall away when trials and persecutions come (Matt. 13: 20, 21). The reason they fall away is because they have no depth of earth. They are surface Christians. Oftentimes their emotions are easily touched; they act quickly and as quickly react when the excitement of the "big meeting" is over. They go out from the Christian company because they do not belong to it in their deepest souls. If they did, they would doubtless continue with it. They go out that it may be made manifest that they are not of it (1 Jno. 2: 18, 19). Dr. Carroll once said: "When you see a star fall, you may know it is not a star."

Nor does this doctrine mean that one who is justified by faith is thereby delivered simply from the penalty of sin and is, therefore, saved whether he is ever changed in character or not. Possibly this misconception of the meaning of the doctrine accounts for much of the vehement opposition to it. Possibly too the advocates of the doctrine are responsible for this misconception by a one sided pre-

sentation of the matter. In fact one may misconceive the doctrine so as to make it mean (in his own mind) the above; and as the doctrine is thus misconceived and misstated no man can be blamed for rejecting it.

Nor does this doctrine mean that one is justified by grace and then transferred to a basis of external or legalistic works as a means of maintaining his standing before God.

The doctrine does mean, on the other hand, that there is a fundamental and ineffaceable difference in character between the regenerate and the unregenerate. The doctrine of salvation by grace, the doctrines of sin and salvation, imply that there is such a fundamental difference. The doctrine of perseverance means that the regenerate man continues *in faith.* It is of the very nature of faith to persist. If it does not persist, it is not a living faith; it is merely an intellectual opinion, or a passing emotion or an empty profession.

Is perseverance a condition of salvation? Yes; of final salvation. He that endureth to the end the same shall be saved (Mark 13: 13). And only those who endure shall be finally saved. Faith is a condition of salvation in the beginning, and clear out to the end. One is not saved by a momentary faith. A momentary faith is not true faith. It is spurious. To say that perseverance is a condition of final salvation is not to make something other than faith a condition of salvation; it is rather to say that saving faith is a persisting, enduring faith; which is the same thing as to say that the life given in regeneration is an enduring, persisting, conquering, undying life. Perseverance in faith, then, is a condition of final salvation and an evidence of initial salvation. Only as one persists in the Christian life can we know that he was truly regenerated to begin with.

2. Basis of the Doctrine

On what is a belief in this doctrine based? In a very brief and summary way we will try to answer this question.

(1) *One thing is a belief in God's purpose of grace, as previously set forth in this book.* If one believes that our salvation comes to us in pursuance of an eternal purpose on God's part, he will be almost certain to believe

in the final perseverance of the saints. If he rejects the former doctrine, he will not be likely to hold very definitely to the latter. A belief in God's purpose of grace carries with it the idea that God takes the initiative in man's salvation, so that man's perseverance would logically follow from God's keeping power. Man's perseverance is the result of God's preservation.

(2) *Again, the final perseverance of the saints seems to be involved in the nature of faith and of the inner life that comes by faith. Faith is an act of complete abandonment to God and his grace as revealed in Christ.* This act of trust in Christ is no half-way matter. It means utter, irrevocable commitment to Christ. And this faith brings a revolution in the soul. It unites to God in an indissoluble bond. This new life in Christ is imperishable in its nature.

Besides, faith is the correlative of grace. The grace of God invites us to a perfect confidence with reference to our standing with God on the ground that Christ has made full provision for our sins. But can we thus trust his grace unless his grace provides for all emergencies and takes care of us out to the end? Otherwise, how could we have assurance with reference to final salvation and deliverance from sin? This doctrine, then, is a corollary of salvation by grace. Grace saves completely or it does not save at all.

(3) *Moreover, this doctrine is clearly taught in the New Testament.* In John 6, Jesus says, in substance, four times that the one who believes in him will be raised up at the last day (verses 39, 40, 44, 54). In John 10 he says that no one is able to snatch his sheep out of his own hand or the Father's; consequently they shall never perish (verses 28, 29). At the end of Rom. 8, Paul says nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (verses 35-39). Again, Paul says that he knows whom he has believed and is persuaded that he is able to keep that which he has committed to him against that day (2 Tim. 1: 12). The author of the book of Hebrews says that Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them (Heb. 7: 25). These passages seem to make impossible the idea that a true Christian shall fall away and be lost.

3. Objections to the Doctrine

On various grounds this doctrine is strenuously objected to.

(1) *One objection is that the opposite doctrine, that a Christian may fall away and be lost, is taught in the Bible.*

This, we believe, is a misunderstanding. There are some passages that teach that one must persevere to be finally saved (e. g. Mark 13: 13). But that is not the issue. The issue comes over whether the Christian will with certainty persevere. Other scriptures set forth perseverance as an evidence that one is a true Christian, and falling away as evidence that one is only an unregenerated professor (e. g. Jno. 8: 31; 1 Jno. 2: 18, 19). Other passages no doubt are addressed to those who have a knowledge of the truth as warnings concerning the danger of rejecting the gospel (e. g. Heb. 10: 26ff). Others still are warnings to Christians about the danger of loss of rewards for lack of faithfulness in the service of God (Heb. 5: 11—6: 8). But we do not believe that any passage in the New Testament teaches that a truly regenerate man may fall away and be lost.

(2) *Another objection is that this doctrine is inconsistent with freedom.*

But this is due to a misunderstanding. The doctrine does not say that a man is saved whether he chooses to be saved or not, but rather that his character is so revolutionized that he will certainly choose to hold on to Christ and thus be saved. To begin a life of righteousness through faith in Christ does not interfere with one's freedom: then why should we hold that the continuance of such a life interferes with freedom? If one can have faith at the time of regeneration and at the same time be free, why can he not have faith through the rest of his life and be free? If faith does not destroy one's freedom at the beginning of the Christian life, why should it be thought to do so later on? This doctrine does not hold that one must continue to be a Christian whether he desires to do so or not, but rather that his likes and dislikes will be so changed that he will choose to continue in the Christian faith.

(3) *Another objection often urged against the doctrine is that it discourages righteousness and encourages sin.* But this objection is also founded on a misconception. It is based on the idea that this doctrine holds that one will be saved no matter how wicked he may become. The doctrine is rather that in regeneration one is so changed that never again can he rest in sin. It says that the regenerate man will persevere in faith, not that he will be saved irrespective of faith. And who will affirm that there is any inconsistency between faith and a life of righteousness, or that there is anything in faith to encourage sin? To say, therefore, that one will persevere in faith is not to prophesy for him a life of sin, but a life of righteousness. Does beginning a life of faith make one more sinful and less righteous? Certainly not. Then why should continuing in a life of faith lead one to live a life of sin rather than a life of righteousness? Surely one who makes this argument has not considered well what he says.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the causal power in the growth of Christian character?
2. Is growth in Christian character conditional upon man's effort?
3. What is the all-inclusive condition of growth in Christian character?
4. Name some special conditions of growth in Christian character.
5. What is meant by perseverance?
6. What three things are given as the basis of the doctrine?
7. State three objections to the doctrine and give a brief answer to each.

A GOSPEL CHURCH

I. Membership of the Church

1. Composed of believers.
2. Baptism necessary to church membership.
3. Membership voluntary.

II. Officers of the Church

1. Apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers.
2. Pastor.
3. Deacons.
4. Other officers.

III. Government of the Church

1. Different forms of church government.
2. Why church should be democratic.
3. Importance of this doctrine.

IV. The Mission of the Church

1. To its own members.
2. To a world lost in sin.
3. To society in general.

VIII

A GOSPEL CHURCH

In speaking of a gospel church, we do not mean simply a religious organization, as, for instance, when people speak of "the Jewish church." Nor do we mean an organization covering a large scope of territory, such as a nation or state in the United States. We use the term rather in an institutional sense, as we speak of the home or the state as institutions.

The church is not a pre-Christian or extra-Christian institution. It grew out of the redemptive mission and work of Jesus Christ. The Christian church, therefore, should not be identified with the Old Testament order of things.

The first church in the New Testament seems to have been a growth. Perhaps we could not designate any particular time as the day of its organization or "setting up." Jesus gathered around him a group, including the apostles and others, with a more or less definite organization. After his ascension, one hundred and twenty of these met together in Jerusalem (Acts 1: 15) until the coming of the Spirit, when a great multitude was added to them. Officers were added later on, and perhaps other features of organization.

I. Membership of the Church

One of the most important questions concerning the church is the question as to who should belong to it. Who should be members of the church?

A First Essential

Only those should be received into church membership who give credible evidence that they have received Christ as Savior and Lord. Becoming a Christian is a

voluntary matter, and only Christians should be members of the church. This grows out of the fact that the church is a Christian institution. Dr. Hodge identifies the Christian church with the commonwealth of Israel.* If this idea were carried out to its logical conclusions, it would destroy the distinctness of Christianity as a spiritual religion and make it a state religion like the Judaism of the Old Testament.

That the church should be composed of the regenerate only, the New Testament makes clear. Concerning that original one hundred and twenty names that constituted the members of the church at Jerusalem, doubtless most of them had been the personal disciples of Jesus. They were all evidently steadfast followers of his or they would not have adhered to the company of his followers in such circumstances. As for those who were added to them, as revealed in the Acts, in practically every case they are described in such a way as to make it clear that they voluntarily received the word of the gospel, repented of their sins and believed in Christ as Savior (Acts 2: 41, 42, 47; 4: 4; 13: 48, 52; 16: 32-34 et al). And there is no evidence whatever to indicate that the contrary was true of any of them. Paul in writing to the churches always addresses them as saints, faithful in Christ, and in such other terms as to leave no doubt that they were all professing Christians (Rom. 1: 7; 6: 1ff; 1 Cor. 1: 1, 2; 2 Cor. 1: 1 etc.).

Moreover, the nature and mission of the church carries with it the view that only regenerate people should belong to the church. The church is a spiritual organization; it is the body of Christ (Rom. 12: 4, 5; 1 Cor. 12: 12ff). Only those, therefore, who are animated by his life should be members of the body.

The work of the church is spiritual. It has a spiritual function. To do this work it must be a spiritual body. An unregenerate church can not be the means of conveying the renewing grace of God to an unregenerate society around it.

Moreover, if regeneration is an absolute necessity to Christian character and regeneration depends on the voluntary acceptance of the gospel, then for a child to be reared in the church, or an adult to be received into the

*Systematic Theology, Vol. III, pp. 548, 549.

church without regeneration is a perilous thing. The inevitable tendency of such a procedure is to encourage the unregenerate church member to think that somehow his church membership makes him a Christian and turns him in his mind away from the necessity of definitely repenting of sin and trusting in Christ for salvation.

Dr. Hodge objects to the doctrine of a regenerated church membership on the ground that man can not tell with certainty who is regenerated and who is not.* We do not maintain that the ideal in the matter can be perfectly attained. Of course, there have been some unregenerated people in the churches and always will be, no doubt. But this does not prove the doctrine wrong. It only proves the necessity of guarding the more carefully the membership of the churches. This argument is of the same nature as the one by the anti-prohibitionists against the prohibition of the liquor traffic to the effect that prohibition could not be enforced. The law cannot be perfectly enforced, but neither can any other. If a regenerated church membership is the ideal, then we should maintain it as nearly as possible. And we maintain that the authority of New Testament teaching and the very nature of the church as a Christian institution commits us to the view that only the regenerate should be members of the church.

2. Baptism a Qualification

Baptism is a necessary qualification for church membership. This is shown in Paul's argument in Rom. 6: 1ff in which he argues on the assumption that all Christians have been baptized. This statement would be accepted with practical unanimity among all Christian denominations. Perhaps the Quakers and some other insignificant exceptions might be found. Of course, there would be serious division when it came to the questions of who should be baptized and what constituted baptism. These questions will be discussed in the next chapter. The question as to who should be baptized will have an important bearing on the question of a regenerate church membership, as discussed in the preceding section.

*See reference to Systematic Theology.

3. A Voluntary Matter

What has been said, and what will be said later on in regard to the qualifications for baptism, make it evident that church membership is always a voluntary matter. There can be no such thing as becoming a member of Christ's church by being born into a certain family or nation. One became a member of the Jewish nation by natural birth, and one becomes today a member of a certain family or nation that way. But one can not become a member of the church of Christ that way. Nor can one come into the church by any ceremony performed by proxy or through vows taken on one's behalf by someone else. Every man must hear, repent, believe, be baptized and join the church for himself. Becoming a Christian is a matter of personal choice, and so is every Christian duty; and where personal choice is absent no act can have moral or religious value.

II. Officers of the Church

Practically every organization must have officers. Evidently the churches of the New Testament had them. The question of the officers of the church, however, is not a matter so vitally related to its existence as the question discussed in the preceding division concerning the qualifications of its members nor as the ones yet to be discussed concerning the form of its government and the mission of the church. A church might exist and perform its functions without officers, but it could not exist as a church if its members were unregenerate. It would then cease to possess the spirit of Christ and would necessarily cease to function as his body. Yet a church can not do its best work without officers.

1. Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists and Teachers* (1 Cor. 12: 28, 29. Eph. 4: 11).

These officials are mentioned in the New Testament, but do not seem to have been officers of local churches. The apostles evidently possessed a high degree of authority among the early churches, because of their relation to Christ and their apostolic call and mission (Mark. 3: 13.

*On this section, cf. of Dargan's Ecclesiology.

Acts 1: 21). They might be called the authentic founders and guides of the early churches. Their peculiar relation to Christ made it impossible for them to have any successors.

The prophets were probably functionaries rather than officials; that is, prophecy was speaking forth a message under the direct inspiration of the Spirit. It was a gift, more or less temporary in its nature, that might be given either to an official or to others in the church. It is likely, therefore, that there was no official prophetic class, but a prophetic gift conferred at special times upon certain Christians.

Some have thought that the evangelists spoken of in the New Testament were more like our modern missionaries. As to teaching, it was probably a function performed by pastors and others. A pastor was to be "apt to teach" as a qualification. (1 Tim. 3: 2). Pastors and teachers are mentioned together by Paul in such a way as to make the impression that they were not separate officers but two functions of one office. (Eph. 4: 11). No doubt teaching was a very important function in the New Testament churches, and doubtless was one of the duties of the pastors. But there may have been also persons who had this as their special function in the churches.

2. Pastor

The most significant officer in the New Testament as connected with a local church was that of pastor. There are three terms used in the New Testament for that office —pastor, elder and bishop. In Acts 20, in the account of Paul's meeting with the elders of the church at Ephesus, in verse 17 they are called "elders" while in verse 28 Paul calls them "bishops" (Am. Rev.). The verb translated "feed" in verse 28, means to tend as a shepherd, act as shepherd. This is the verb corresponding to the noun that is translated "pastor." So here in one passage, the same men are called "elders" and "bishops" and they are exhorted to "pastor" the flock. Again, in Titus 1: 5, 7, Paul uses the terms "elders" and "bishops" to apply to the same office. In 1 Peter 5: 1, 2, Peter addresses the "elders," and exhorts them to "pastor" or "shepherd" the flock.*

*See Dargan, pp. 87, 88.

The duties of pastors are not defined in detail in the New Testament. Evidently they were intended to exercise general oversight in spiritual matters, teach their people, and guide in all the activities of the church. Their character and spiritual attainments must be such as to qualify them for such leadership (1 Tim. 3: 1ff. Tit. 1: 5ff. 1 Pet. 5: 1ff).

3. Deacons

Deacons were another class of officers in the churches of the New Testament. The choosing of the seven in Acts 6 is usually considered the origin of the office of deacon. They are not called deacons, however, in that chapter, and there is no positive proof that this was the origin of that office.

The qualifications of deacons were to be much the same as those of pastors or bishops (1 Tim. 3: 8ff). Not much is said to throw light on their duties or functions, but it is usually considered that they should have charge of the financial or business affairs of the church. It is evident from their qualifications, however, that they were to perform their duties for spiritual purposes or ends. It follows, therefore, that no man should be made a deacon merely because he is a good business man. Doubtless he should have business ability, but he should also have the highest moral and spiritual qualities as well.

4. Other Officers

While pastors and deacons are the only officers of a local church clearly referred to in the New Testament, we can not be sure that the churches had no others. Certain it is that churches since then, even those claiming to follow most closely the New Testament, have had various other officers; such as clerk, treasurer, trustee, Sunday-school superintendent, etc. On what ground can this be justified? On the ground of necessity. The appointment or election of such officers comes within the range of method, as Dr. Gambrell would say, where we are to use common sense and judgment in carrying out the task committed to us by our Savior and Lord. The commission given to us justifies us in using any means or adopting any methods that are consistent with the prin-

ciples of the gospel and the fundamentals of ecclesiology, such as a regenerate church membership and a democratic organization of the church. This principle would not justify us in the appointment of "bishops" in the modern acceptation of the term, for this would interfere with a democratic organization of the church (soon to be discussed) and the spiritual freedom of the children of God, and would, therefore, be anti-Christian in principle.

III. Government of the Church

Under what form of government should the affairs of the church be managed?

1. Different Forms of Church Government

In general there are about four different forms of church government: the monarchical, in which the ultimate authority is in the hands of one man, as the Roman Catholic Church with the pope of Rome as its head; the episcopal, in which the church is governed by a college or body of bishops; the presbyterial, in which the local church is governed by elders, with higher courts of appeal; and the democratic, in which each local congregation is self-governing, and in which there is no body outside itself to which the local congregation is responsible with reference to its own internal affairs. Of course, there are many modifications and combinations of these four general types of organization.

Baptists are democratic in their church government. Each local church is self-governing and independent in the management of its affairs. They apply the term church to no organization including more than the local congregation, and regard all boards, associations and conventions simply as bodies organized for convenience in co-operative work and advice with reference to matters of interest common to the churches.

2. Why the Church Should Be Democratic in Organization

Several reasons might be given why the church should be organized in a democratic manner.

First, the New Testament churches were organized on this plan. There is no evidence that there were any "ruling elders," or "bishops," or any other official class in the New Testament that managed the affairs of the churches. In the case of a difficulty between brethren, as recorded in Matt. 18, Jesus makes the church the court of last appeal.

In the sixth chapter of Acts, the apostles asked the multitude to "look out" seven men whom they should appoint over the distribution of the church's help to the widows; and the saying pleased the "whole multitude," and they (the multitude) chose the seven. In Acts 15, when the dispute arose about whether Gentile converts should be required to keep the law, the "whole church" (verse 22) decided the matter under the leadership and advice of the apostles.

In 1 Cor. 5, Paul gives advice to the church at Corinth about how to deal with the incestuous man. He does not give the church any orders after the manner of a modern bishop. In fact Paul always advised, exhorted, instructed the churches that he dealt with. He claimed apostolic authority against the assaults of his adversaries; but he did not seem to think that even apostolic authority authorized him to exercise coercion in dealing with a church. And if Paul did not have the right to give orders to churches, we believe no man since has had such a right.

Moreover, we ground this doctrine of a democratic church on some fundamental principles in the Christian religion, as well as on New Testament practice and precept.

One of these is the absolute Lordship of Christ. He claimed to be Lord of all men. To recognize his lordship in the spiritual realm is inconsistent with recognizing the authority of priest, or bishop or pope in the realm of religion. The Christian can not recognize any master in the spiritual realm, in the realm of conscience, without to that extent denying the Lordship of Jesus. This necessarily makes the church a democratic organization.

Again, the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith carries with it a democratic organization of the church. When men recognize themselves as hopeless, helpless, sinners saved by grace, all artificial distinctions among them

will melt away. There will be then no Jew and Gentile, bond nor free, priest, bishop nor pope, no clergy and laity. Historically the departure from a democratic organization of the church came hand in hand with a change that substituted a priestly mediation of salvation through "sacraments" for salvation by grace to be appropriated through faith by the individual sinner. A sacramental salvation mediated by priests goes with and necessitates the rule of the priestly class, but salvation by grace implies a democratic church.

Another thing that would indicate that the church should be a democratic body is the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells in every Christian to make known the will of Christ, not simply in the official class of the church. There is no class in the church that has a monopoly on the indwelling Spirit of God. The purpose of the Spirit's indwelling is to make Christ's will effective in the church and through the church in the world. But since the Spirit dwells in all believers, every believer should have the privilege of making known the will of Christ as the Spirit has revealed it to him. An episcopal government or government by any official class is based on the assumption that the Spirit resides in a special way in the bishops or the clergy or the elders. A democratic government of the church is based on the assumption that the Spirit dwells in all believers, and that a man's understanding of the will of God is limited by his spiritual perception, not by his official position. In a democratic organization of the church, bishops do not constitute the church, but the bishop simply performs certain functions for the congregation by appointment of the congregation. All these functions—preaching, administering the ordinances, and so on—are the functions of the whole congregation of believers, not of official clergymen.

3. Importance of the Doctrine

We believe that what has been said will justify the position that the question of the democratic organization of the church is not a question of small moment. We believe that it is essential to a true church. No other form of organization is consistent with a spiritual religion, and any other form of organization tends toward a formal and sacramental religion. To the extent that the church departs from a democratic organization and government,

to that extent does it cease to be Christian in its principles and life. Certainly at this time when the world is moving so rapidly in the direction of democracy in industry and political organization, it is no time to move in the opposite direction in religion.

IV. The Mission of the Church

One of the most important questions concerning any organization is the question of its mission. What is it for? What does it propose to do? We might consider this question concerning the church in two or three relations.

1. Its Mission to Its Own Members

The church does have a mission relative to its own members. A part of its mission concerning its members is to develop the Christ-life within them, to furnish them with every possible stimulus and means of becoming like Christ in character and life.

Then another duty that the church owes its members is to give them training in practical Christian activities. Every church should see to it that every member is given some definite Christian service to perform. Here is the importance of the Sunday school as a teaching agency and of young people's organizations as training agencies. But these are by no means the only agencies that can be used in training church members in Christian service.

Then every church owes it to its members to exercise corrective discipline when its members violate the principles of Christian living. Especially ought this to be done when the principles of morality are flagrantly violated.

2. The Duty of the Church to a World Lost in Sin

The thing that comes nearest to the primary and all-inclusive mission of the church is its duty to carry the gospel message to the lost world. This means evangelism at home and missions abroad. This evangelistic, missionary spirit should be in everything that the church does; it should pervade all its services and activities. This task necessitates co-operative effort on the part of the churches. It is also the chief means of developing the

Christian spirit in its own members. Any man becomes more like Christ as he prays and works to get other people to know him.

3. The Duty of the Church to Human Society in General

There are many forms of philanthropic and benevolent work that churches may and should engage in; such as establishing orphanages, and sanitariums, and other helpful institutions. Such work should usually be a co-operative work on the part of a group of churches, but in some cases such institutions can be sustained by a single church. Often the duty of the church in this respect will be dependent somewhat on its location and relation to the social environment and to other churches. As a rule churches should be sympathetic and ready to help in any enterprise that will uplift and help needy humanity.

Another thing needs to be recognized; namely, that one of the most effective things that churches do for helping mankind is to furnish the moral and spiritual dynamic to their members and others whom they influence for righteousness and helpful lives. In this way the churches exercise a mighty leavening influence on human society in general and their power is more and more being felt for good in the world.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What three things are said about the membership of the church? Give a brief statement on each point.
2. What is said about "apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers"?
3. Discuss the office of pastor.
4. Discuss the office of deacon.
5. What is said about other officers?
6. What are the different forms of church government?
7. Give reasons why a church should be democratic.
8. What is said about the importance of this doctrine?
9. What is the mission of a church to its own members?
10. What is the mission of a church to a lost world?
11. What is the mission of a church to society in general?

GOSPEL ORDINANCES

I. Baptism

1. The purpose of baptism.
   (1) Not a condition of salvation.
   (2) Symbolizes salvation.
   (3) Commemorates death and resurrection of Jesus.
   (4) Points to hope of resurrection.
   (5) Means of confessing Christ.
2. Act of baptism.
   (1) Shown in descriptions in English translations.
   (2) Shown by meaning of Greek word.
   (3) Shown by meaning of ordinance.
3. Candidate for baptism.
4. Authority or responsibility for baptizing.

II. The Lord's Supper

1. The meaning of the supper.
   (1) Catholic view.
   (2) Lutheran view.
   (3) Reformed view.
   (4) Baptist view.
2. "Close communion"

III. The Perpetuity of the Ordinances

IX

GOSPEL ORDINANCES

Christ instituted two ceremonial ordinances and committed them to his people for perpetual observance—baptism and the Lord's supper. These two ceremonies are pictorial representations of the fundamental facts of the gospel and of our salvation through the gospel. Over against this view is the view of the Roman Catholic Church that these two ordinances—with five others—are "sacraments" that convey grace to the participant. Underlying the multiplication of "sacraments" is the assumption that nothing is "holy" or good except as it is consecrated and made so by the "Holy Church." Even the ground in which the body is buried is unholy until consecrated by the Church (the Roman Church, of course).

One reason, perhaps the fundamental reason, that Christians generally have recognized only baptism and the Lord's supper as gospel ordinances is because other ceremonies that have been proposed do not have any essential relation to the gospel. These two do. They were instituted by Christ, for a very obvious reason. That reason is that they are adapted to set forth the facts of the gospel and our experience of salvation through the gospel.

I. Baptism

Jesus submitted to baptism at the hands of John (Mark 1: 9-11), administered the ordinance (through his disciples), and commanded his people to do so as part of their work to the end of the age (Matt. 28: 19). It is, therefore, worthy of our careful consideration.

1. The Purpose of the Ordinance

One of the most important considerations concerning this ordinance is its meaning or significance. We will consider this first. What is the purpose of the administration of this ordinance?

(1) *Baptism does not save, nor does it help to save.* It is not a condition of salvation, nor of the remission of sins. It does not convey grace; in the historical significance of the terms, therefore, it is not a "sacrament."

The Roman Catholic Church (with some others) holds that in the act of baptism the soul is regenerated, that one's sins, actual and original, are remitted. We are actually and literally baptized into Christ and our sins are literally washed away. There is, therefore, no salvation without baptism.

The Disciples hold a somewhat similar position. They do not hold that baptism within itself regenerates or saves, but that it is the culmination or climax of the regenerating process; that baptism is one of the conditions of the remission of sins; that it is for the remission of sins in the sense that one submits to baptism for the purpose of obtaining the remission of sins.

Although these two positions are not exactly the same, they are enough alike that we can discuss them together, each one holding in general that baptism is essential to salvation.

There are a number of passages in the New Testament that are used to prove that baptism is necessary to salvation. One is Mark 16: 16 where Jesus tells his disciples: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned." Another is Jno. 3: 5, where Jesus tells Nicodemus that one can not enter into the Kingdom of God unless he be born of water and the Spirit, and the similar statement of Paul in Tit. 3: 5, where he speaks of the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. Then there is Peter's statement recorded in Acts 2: 38, exhorting the people to "repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for (Gk. eis, into) the remission of your sins." Also we have the statement of Ananias in Acts 22: 16 saying to Saul, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Paul also in Rom. 6: 1-4, speaks of our being baptized into Christ and into his death.

As to Mark 16: 16, it may be said that the textual evidence is against its genuineness, and it would not, therefore, be safe to quote it as a genuine part of Mark's gospel. Furthermore, it is to be noted that when the matter is put negatively it is said that he that *believeth* not shall

be condemned, as if faith were the deciding factor, rather than baptism.

John 3: 5 and Tit. 3: 5 probably do not refer to baptism at all, but rather to the cleansing power of God's Spirit in regeneration, which is symbolized in baptism. But if they be taken as referring to baptism, the remark that follows about the other passages would apply equally to them.

As to the other passages, the following may be said. They may be interpreted in one of two ways—either literally or symbolically. For instance, Acts 2: 38 means either that literally one is baptized into the remission of sins, or symbolically he is so baptized. Paul in Rom. 6: 3 means that either literally or symbolically one is baptized into Christ and into his death. Acts 22: 16 means that either literally or symbolically, in a picture, one's sins are washed away. And the same thing is true of every other passage in the New Testament that is claimed to teach the idea that baptism saves or is a condition of salvation. Between these two methods of interpreting these passages there is no logical standing ground. There can be no half-way position. That is the weakness of the position of the Disciples. It tries to make baptism a condition of salvation without holding with the Catholics that baptism actually and literally washes away sins.

As a matter of fact, when one thinks about it, he recognizes that the word into (eis in Greek) implies motion spatially when meant literally; but to talk about being literally baptized into Christ, into his death, or into the remission of sins is to talk nonsense. But one must either hold that or grant that being baptized into the remission of sins, into Christ, or into his death is figurative language. One might baptize another literally into the Jordan as John baptized Jesus (Mark. 1: 9, Am. Rev., margin); but one cannot baptize another literally into Christ, or his death or the remission of sins, because these are spiritual and not physical or spatial realities for us. To try to mix the two and hold that one by being spatially (i. e. literally) baptized into water can be thereby baptized spiritually into Christ is to try to identify two things that are so fundamentally different that they can not be identified. The spatial may picture, or represent, or symbolize the spiritual, but the two can not

be identified. To identify the spatial and the spiritual is to nullify or destroy the spiritual. That is exactly what Romanism has done by trying to identify spiritual realities with the spatial and historical forms of religion.

Moreover, to interpret these passages literally, i. e., in such a way as to make baptism a condition of salvation, is to make the New Testament fundamentally a self-contradictory book. This would introduce an inconsistency into the very heart of its doctrine of salvation. This is evident if we look at the numerous passages in the New Testament where it is plainly taught that the only conditions of salvation are spiritual. It is abundantly set forth in the New Testament that repentance and faith are the only conditions of salvation—conditions that are primarily and only spiritual. Salvation is a spiritual transaction and depends on spiritual conditions alone. And to make salvation depend on any outward ceremony or act is to destroy the nature of Christianity as a spiritual religion. It is to make God a "grand master of red tape." It is to make him an arbitrary God. God is not arbitrary. He has not arbitrarily "prescribed" any conditions of salvation. The only conditions of salvation are the ones necessarily involved in the relations of a God of grace to a sinner whom he would save from sin.

From what has been said, it follows that the conditions of salvation are universal and unchangeable. God did not save people one way in Old Testament times and another way in New Testament times. Salvation has always been by grace on God's part and by faith on man's part. God saved Abraham by faith before the law was given. Grace antedates law, therefore, in God's dealings with man (i. e., the Old Testament or Mosaic law) (Rom. 4: 9ff. Gal. 3: 15ff). No man was ever saved by keeping the law.

Nor is it true that the "law of pardon" was established on the day of Pentecost, including baptism as a condition. On that assumption, Jesus never told men himself how to get into the kingdom of God, or how to be saved. Such passages as John 1: 12; 3: 14, 15, 16, 18, 36; 5: 24, and many others promising salvation on the sole condition of faith in Christ could not be claimed by us as valid today. On such a method of interpretation, the fact that

Jesus saved the paralytic man (Mark 2: 5), the sinful woman (Luke 7: 47, 48) and the thief on the cross (Luke 23: 42, 43) would offer to sinners today no encouragement to believe that they, too, might be saved simply by trusting the Savior's grace. Such a method of interpreting the Scriptures makes them as much of a "crazy quilt" patchwork as does modern radical criticism. This does not mean that we are not to recognize a progressive unfolding of a plan for the race on God's part. But this plan as progressively unfolded is a unitary plan, and its fundamental idea is salvation by grace through faith. God is not a whimsical God, jumping from one plan to another and constantly reversing himself.

Besides, if we examine the New Testament record from Pentecost on, salvation by faith is just as consistently set forth after Pentecost as before. An examination of the following passages makes that perfectly clear: Acts 10 43; 13: 38, 39; 16: 31; Rom. 1: 16; Gal. 3: 26; Eph. 2: 8. Many others are just as decisive. The case of Cornelius and his company is decisive, as we have the record in Acts 10: 34ff. It is there made as clear as words can make it that the Holy Spirit fell on them in a great demonstration before one word was said about their being baptized (44-48).

So we maintain that the conditions of salvation have never been changed. No man was ever saved without faith; no man ever will be. It is a moral impossibility. Men have been saved without baptism, in Old Testament times and in New Testament times, before Pentecost and since, Jew and Gentile. Therefore, baptism is not a condition of salvation.

Another thing to remember is that salvation is a matter of spiritual experience; something, therefore, that one is conscious of, that one can know. It is a matter of definite, conscious experience that gives one sure evidence of acceptance with God. Thousands of men and women have known salvation apart from baptism. As a matter of spiritual experience salvation is not tied to baptism, nor to any other external act; but salvation is inseparably connected with repentance and faith. To those who know Christianity as a vital experience of fellowship with God through faith in Christ it is folly to argue that one cannot be saved without baptism. When one is

definitely conscious in his own experience that a certain thing does take place, he is not liable to pay much attention to those who tell him that that thing cannot take place.

(2) *While baptism does not save, nor is a condition of salvation, it does symbolize a salvation that comes to us by faith in Christ.* This point will not need extended discussion, because much that was said on the previous point bears directly on this.

Baptism is an external washing; salvation is an inner or spiritual cleansing, a purification of the heart by faith. This inner cleansing is fittingly pictured or symbolized in the external washing of baptism. This is no doubt the significance of "washing away sins" in baptism in Acts 22: 16.

Paul sets forth the symbolic significance of baptism in Rom. 6: 1ff. He speaks of the Christian as one who has died to sin and risen to walk in newness of life, as symbolized in his baptism. Baptism is a symbolical death and resurrection. It gets its meaning from an experience of dying to sin and rising to newness of life; apart from such an experience, therefore, it has no significance. To put it another way, baptism symbolizes our union with Christ. We are baptized into Christ (Rom. 6: 3). It symbolizes our remission of sins. We are baptized into the remission of sins (Acts 2: 38) i. e., baptism symbolizes or pictures our passage into a forgiven state or condition.

(3) *But our death to sin and resurrection to newness of life is a death and resurrection that comes through faith in Jesus as a crucified and risen Redeemer.* Paul expresses it in Gal. 2: 20 by saying that he has been crucified with Christ so that the "old man" Paul no longer lives, but Christ lives in him. He says in Rom. 6: 4 that we are buried with Christ through baptism into death, but he has just said in verse three that we are baptized into Christ's death. Our baptism symbolizes our death to sin and spiritual resurrection, but it is a death and resurrection grounded in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Our baptism, then, in symbolizing our spiritual death and resurrection commemorates the death and resurrection of Jesus as the fundamental facts of the gospel.

Outside of Christ's death for our sins and resurrection from the dead there is no gospel. And baptism as a gospel ordinance commemorates the death and resurrection of Jesus as the fundamental facts of the gospel.

(4) *It is sometimes stated that baptism is also meant to point forward to the hope of the resurrection for the Christian.* This hope of the resurrection is a fundamental gospel blessing for those who believe in Christ. Our hope of resurrection grows out of the resurrection of Jesus, as Paul shows in 1 Cor. 15. And in verse 29 he says that baptism for the dead (whatever that was) would have no meaning apart from the resurrection from the dead. Paul seems to connect baptism with our hope of resurrection life beyond the grave, as well as with the death and resurrection of Jesus and with our spiritual death and resurrection with him.

(5) *Baptism, then, is a means of publicly and formally confessing Christ as Savior and Lord.* It is our confession of him as the one who brought salvation to us in his death and resurrection. It is a sign of our submission to him as Lord in our lives. Disobedience to his will or subjection to the mastery of sin in our lives is inconsistent for one who has put on Christ in baptism. Baptism is our formal and public oath of allegiance to him as Lord because of his saving grace in our lives.

2. The Act of Baptism

The question as to what constitutes the act of baptism, or as sometimes expressed, the "mode" of baptism, is one about which there has been much discussion. We do not propose to go in any extensive way into this question. We have dwelt on the purpose or significance of baptism, believing that it is the fundamental question in regard to the ordinance and that a right understanding of its significance really settles every other question that may be raised in regard to it.

What, then, is the proper act of baptism? We maintain that immersion and immersion only constitutes the act of baptism. Briefly, we give a few reasons for this position.

(1) *In the first place, the description of baptism, as practiced in New Testament times and given in the English translations of the New Testament, suggest immer-*

sion. In Mark 1: 9, 10, it is said that Jesus was baptized of John *into the Jordan,* and that, coming straightway up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened. When Philip baptized the eunuch, they went down into the water and came up out of the water (Acts 8: 38, 39).

(2) *Another argument, much more conclusive than the above, is based on the meaning of the Greek verb translated (or rather transferred, since it was not properly a translation) baptize in the New Testament and the corresponding noun translated baptism.* This word means properly to dip, or immerse, either literally or figuratively. In his New Testament Greek lexicon, Thayer defines the verb as meaning "to dip repeatedly, to immerse, submerge," and the noun as meaning "immersion, submersion." Cremer in his Biblico-Theological lexicon of New Testament Greek defines the verb as meaning "immerse, submerse." All other meanings are secondary and derived.

Now there were words in the Greek language, in the days of the New Testament, meaning sprinkle and pour. But the New Testament writers always use the word that means to dip or immerse. If they thought of sprinkling or pouring as baptism, why is it that they never use the words that mean to sprinkle or to pour to describe the act of baptism?

(3) *The strongest argument of all, however, lies in the significance of the ordinance.* Some people readily grant that the New Testament way of baptizing was by immersion, but argue that there is no necessity for adhering to the New Testament example in the matter. The Catholics hold that the church has the right to change the act of baptism since ultimate authority is vested in the church. Many Protestants maintain that it is a matter of comparative unimportance and that there is no use to divide over the question of how much water should be used in baptism. That is a very adroit and misleading way of putting the matter. Especially is this misleading to people who do not know much about the gospel of Christ and who often do not care so very much.

The fundamental question here is really this: What is the meaning and purpose of baptism? What is it for? We maintain that the fundamental facts of the gospel are the death and resurrection of Jesus as the ground of

our salvation and that baptism is meant to set forth these facts. Consequently, we maintain that the meaning of the ordinance of baptism lies, partly at least, in the act which represents a death, burial and resurrection. Baptism does beautifully represent this; sprinkling or pouring does not. For this reason we maintain that no other act than immersion is baptism; it is something else substituted for baptism.

3. The Candidate for Baptism

Who should be baptized? Or what constitutes one a proper candidate for baptism?

If what was said about the purpose of baptism is true, then it follows that the only person properly qualified for baptism is one who has heard the gospel, accepted its message and believed in Christ as his Savior.

John the Baptist demanded "fruits worthy of repentance" before he would baptize those applying to him (Matt. 3: 7ff). Jesus "made and baptized" disciples (John 4: 1), and the same was to be the order in the great commission (Matt. 28: 19). On the day of Pentecost they baptized those who received the word (Acts 10: 41). Paul, in writing to the Romans, addresses them as those who have been baptized to symbolize a death to sin and resurrection to newness of life (Rom. 6: 1ff). He usually addresses the members of the churches as "saints" or in some similar way, showing that the members of the churches to whom he wrote were adult Christians (not necessarily all grown people, but old enough to be called "saints," etc.) (Rom. 1: 7; 1 Cor. 1: 2; 2 Cor. 1: 1; Eph. 1: 1, etc.).

Against this view it is maintained that infant children should be baptized and reared in the church. This is based on various grounds. Roman Catholics and others who hold to "sacramental" salvation hold to infant baptism on the ground that children are regenerated in baptism. Evangelical Christians who repudiate baptismal regeneration have difficulty in finding grounds for infant baptism. Some defend the doctrine on the ground that the child is born in the kingdom and should, therefore, be baptized and reared in the church and thus kept in the kingdom. But this denies the New Testament teaching to the effect that no person can enter the kingdom

without regeneration. It also disregards the fact that salvation is a personal transaction and that the grace of God must be personally and consciously appropriated.

Sometimes infant baptism is defended on the ground of New Testament precept and example. But there is no evidence in the New Testament in favor of the practice. Appeal is made to the household baptisms, but in most of these cases there are statements indicating that they were composed of those who could hear and believe the gospel. In the case of the jailer, Paul preached to the whole household, and they all believed and rejoiced (Acts 16: 32-34). Crispus and his whole house believed (Acts 18: 8). Cornelius and his house were saved by believing the preaching of Peter (Acts 11: 14). Paul baptized the household of Stephanus (1 Cor. 1: 16), but it might be worthy of note that the members of this household ministered to the saints (1 Cor. 16: 15). In the case of Lydia, it is to be presumed that the regular New Testament order was followed: hearing the gospel, believing the word, followed by baptism.

4. WHO SHALL ADMINISTER THE ORDINANCE? A word might be said here about another phase of the ordinance of baptism. Who has the authority to baptize? Another way of putting the matter is this: Who is responsible for administering the ordinance?

In general, three answers are given to this question. One is that the "clergy," or officially recognized ministry, is responsible for the ordinance and has the authority to administer it. But this theory draws a line of distinction between "clergy" and "laity" that is foreign to the New Testament and tends toward sacerdotalism and sacramentalism. The New Testament gives no intimation that there is to be an official class who by being "ordained" are to have conferred on them the "authority to administer the ordinances" or to perform other ecclesiastical functions that other Christians cannot perform. A pastor or other "ordained minister" or official in administering the ordinances is only acting as a spokesman or representative of the congregation or church and has no other authority than that which comes by virtue of his being such a representative or spokesman.

Another view is that an individual Christian can baptize. But this would lead to all sorts of irregularities and confusion. The other view is that the responsibility

for the administration of the ordinance rests with the congregation or church. This we believe to be the correct position. One reason for it is that baptism is generally recognized as the means of publicly confessing Christ and identifying oneself with the congregation or community of believers. This was clearly the case in the New Testament. If this be true, then baptism is a community affair. It is not a purely individual act. But where the community of Christians is concerned, there is a community responsibility with reference to the administration of the ordinance.

It may be objected here that the case of Philip and the eunuch does not agree with our contention, but supports the view that any Christian should be allowed to baptize. It is true that Philip baptized the eunuch. Nor is it necessary to suppose that any church had given him any special authority in the matter. Such a supposition would be a pure assumption with no ascertainable facts to justify it. Where there is no church, we believe any Christian or group of Christians could administer the ordinance. But where there is a church, the whole church is concerned, since baptism is a ceremony by which one publicly and formally identifies himself with the Christian community. What concerns the whole community of Christians the whole community has a right to regulate. Such a matter should not be left indiscriminately to any individual. When Cornelius and his household were converted, Peter consulted the group of Christians that came down with him from Jerusalem. If an individual should administer the ordinance, where there is no church, as in the case of a missionary in unevangelized territory, when the baptized person comes to a church asking for recognition and fellowship, the church can recognize the baptism by receiving him into fellowship.

This suggests the question of "alien immersion" or "alien baptism," i. e., an immersion performed by a minister or representative of some other denomination. Some Baptist churches receive such baptisms, while others do not. We would not favor the reception of such baptisms. We would not, however, put our objection on the ground of "church succession," i. e., on the ground that there had been an unbroken chain of churches back to the New Testament; nor on the ground of a succession of

regularly ordained ministers. Aside from the question as to whether there has been a demonstrable succession of churches back to New Testament days, if we base the validity of the ordinances on such a succession, then we could not be certain about the validity of the baptism of any particular man without actually tracing the succession of the church under whose auspices he was baptized. Besides, this method of validating the church and the ordinances smacks more of an episcopal ecclesiasticism than it does of a spiritual democracy. There is no "church authority" that can be handed down in any such way as that.

It is not a question of an externally conveyed authority that validates the ordinances, but rather a question of so performing the ordinances that they shall serve the spiritual purpose or function that they were intended to serve; and we do not believe that this can be done by recognizing the baptism of people who do not themselves submit to the ordinance as set forth in the New Testament—many of these bodies practicing sprinkling or pouring for baptism, many of them not requiring a profession of faith in Christ as a condition of baptism, and some of them baptizing people as a condition of receiving the remission of sins.

II. The Lord's Supper

The other ceremonial ordinance instituted by Jesus just before the crucifixion is the Lord's supper. The principles laid down in interpreting baptism will apply to the Lord's supper. Consequently it will not be necessary to dwell so much at length on the Lord's supper.

1. The Meaning of the Supper

There are four distinct views with reference to the meaning of the Lord's supper.

One is the Roman Catholic theory known as transubstantiation. According to this view, when the priest consecrates the bread and wine, they cease to be bread and wine, although they continue to have the appearance and apparent qualities of bread and wine, and are converted into the substance of the flesh and blood of Christ. Con-

sequently those who partake are not eating bread and drinking wine, but are eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ. This does not mean, however, that the bread and wine become merely the physical flesh and blood of Christ, but that each particle of the bread and wine becomes the whole substance of Christ—body, soul and divinity. Any one, therefore, partaking of the least particle of the bread or wine (rather of that which was bread and wine before it was changed) receives the whole Christ. Hence it is not necessary that one should partake of both bread and wine. Consequently the laity are given only the bread, the priesthood alone communing in both kinds.

Another theory is the Lutheran, known as consubstantiation. This theory denies that the substance of bread and wine is changed into the substance of Christ, but affirms that Christ is present "in, with and under" the substance of bread and wine. Luther, the originator of this view insisted on a literal interpretation of the words "This is my body" and "This is my blood." He would not allow that this was symbolic or figurative language. His position of consubstantiation he supported on the ground of the omnipresence of Christ, which he affirmed to be true of his body as well as of his spiritual nature, after the ascension.

The Reformed or Calvinistic theology, in opposition to the Lutheran, denied the omnipresence of Christ's body. In conformity with this, it denied "consubstantiation" but affirmed the dynamic or spiritual presence of Christ in the elements of bread and wine in the supper. This theory is not quite so clear and definite as the other two, and is hence a little more difficult to grasp. It denies, however, both the Catholic and Lutheran theories, but affirms that there is more meaning to the elements used in the supper than simply a symbolic meaning. Christ is actually present in the elements, but only dynamically or spiritually.

Over against these three theories, we would set the view that the supper is symbolic in its significance. These four views might be summed up with reference to their interpretation of the saying of Christ, "This is my body" (Matt. 26: 26). The Catholic view says that Jesus meant that the bread ceases to be bread and comes

to be the substance of his body. The Lutheran view is that the substance of Christ's body is present "in, with and under" the substance of the bread. The reformed view is that Christ is present spiritually in the bread. The Zwinglian view is that the bread symbolizes the body of Christ broken for us.

This last view does not deny the spiritual omnipresence of Christ, but it does deny that Christ is present in the bread and wine of the supper any more than he is present in any other material substance. And the spiritual omnipresence of Christ as expressed for instance in his words, "Lo, I am with you alway" is a presence that cannot be conveyed or expressed in any material substance. The bread and wine of the supper do not contain or convey his spiritual presence; they only symbolize or picture it so that it may be real to the mind and thus strengthen faith.

We believe, then, that the Lord's supper is symbolic in its significance. There are several phases of this general statement that might be emphasized.

The first and fundamental thing is that the supper is a memorial of the death of Christ for our sins. He makes the bread to represent his broken body and the wine to represent his blood poured out for the remission of sins (Matt. 26: 26-28). Paul says that as often as we eat the bread and drink the wine we show forth the Lord's death. The bread and wine then constantly remind us of the broken body and shed blood of the Savior.

While not so clearly expressed in the New Testament, it is perhaps justifiable to say that partaking of the elements symbolizes the support of our spiritual life by our appropriation by faith of Christ and his sacrifice for us. We thus symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood in the supper. The cup which we bless is a participation in the blood of Christ, and the bread which we break is a participation in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 10: 16, Am. Rev. margin). Our repeated symbolic participation in the blood and body of Christ signifies a continuous appropriation of Christ as the once crucified Savior, but the Savior now living and present to the faith that appropriates him.

It has sometimes been said that the Lord's supper is a communion with Christ, not a communion of Christians

with one another. But it is clearly both. Christians commune with one another because they commune with Christ. It has also been said that in observing the supper that I am to think only of Christ. But to think of Christ always means to think of others. His Spirit always prompts us to remember others. The Lord's supper is not a merely individual affair; it is a community or church matter. Paul expresses this in 1 Cor. 10: 17 when he says that "we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread." The one loaf seems to symbolize the unity of the church. He says again that because of the divisions or factions among the Corinthians they could not eat the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11: 18ff). He then goes on to reprove them for their utter disregard of each other in the way in which they observed the supper. Surely, then in the supper one should have some thought of his fellow Christian, and the supper symbolizes the unity in spirit of those eating of the common loaf and drinking of the common cup.

2. "Close Communion"

What was said in the last paragraph might throw light on another question. Among Baptists there has been some discussion of what is known as "close communion." The question is whether or not they should invite to the Lord's supper Christians outside of their own denomination. Those holding the "close communion" position have been severely criticized by other people and by "open communion" Baptists for their supposed narrowness in the matter.

We will try to state in a few words why we believe the "close communion" Baptist is right in his position.

In the first place, unless we are to regard the observance of the supper as a purely individual matter, then somebody must be responsible for its administration. Naturally this would be the church under whose auspices the observance takes place. The only other alternative would be to regard the "clergy" or official class in the church as responsible for its administration. But, as pointed out in the case of baptism, that idea is foreign to a spiritual and non-sacramental religion. Paul's whole

discussion of the matter shows that he regarded the church as the responsible body in the matter (See 1 Cor. 11). He says "When you come together in the church." This throws the responsibility for the proper administration of the ordinance on the church or congregation. The church, then, would naturally have the prerogative of deciding who should come to the supper.

Again, there would be general agreement that there are to be some restrictions in inviting people to the Lord's supper. The invitation is not to the whole world. The invitation would at least be limited to Christians; otherwise the supper would lose all significance as a Christian institution. There would be no meaning in inviting non-Christians to an observance that celebrated that event as the act that founded Christianity. Since there are to be some restrictions in giving the invitation, it is a question as to how restricted it shall be.

Our position, then, is that the Lord's supper is a church ordinance and not an individual matter, and that Baptists can not consistently invite to the Lord's supper those whom they would not admit to church membership. The stress has usually been put on the irregularity in baptism as a reason for declining to invite others to the supper. Baptism certainly does precede the Lord's supper, and we believe the argument that Baptists should not invite to the supper those whom they do not regard as baptized is a valid argument. But we believe that there are other reasons. Any departure from New Testament principles in church polity or other doctrinal beliefs that would make one ineligible to church membership makes him also ineligible to the Lord's supper. We cannot consistently admit one to the Lord's supper and then deny him the other privileges of church membership. This does not mean that Baptists do not regard members of other religious denominations as being Christians; but it does mean that they regard them as having departed from Christian principles in some respects, and therefore Baptists could not admit them to church fellowship. And since the Lord's supper is a church ordinance, one of the most sacred of the privileges of church membership, no one should be admitted to this ordinance who could not be admitted to church membership.

III. The Perpetuity of the Ordinances

The question is sometimes debated as to whether or not these ordinances should be perpetuated. Some seem to think that their day of usefulness is over, and that as religious forms change from age to age there is no reason for continuing to use them. Now, if we saw no more in these ordinances than some people do, we should not feel like insisting on their perpetual use. It is not simply a question of whether or not Jesus himself endorsed or commanded these. As already stated, Jesus submitted to baptism, practiced it, and gave the command in a connection that implies the perpetuity of the ordinance. He also instituted the supper, and Paul says as often as we observe it we show the Lord's death *until he come* (1 Cor. 11: 26).

Why did Jesus institute or endorse these ordinances? Because they were adapted to set forth the fundamental facts of the gospel; namely, the death and resurrection of Jesus for the salvation of sinners. And where the gospel is kept alive in the hearts and minds of men, where they are conscious of being sinners saved by his death and resurrection, and where these ordinances are observed in their New Testament form and with reference to their gospel purpose of setting forth Christ's death and resurrection as the ground of our salvation, we do not believe that it will occur to any one that these ordinances should be abolished. It is only when men begin to lose the sense of dependence on Christ's atoning work for salvation; in other words, when Christianity begins to shade off into an indefinite religiosity, and consequently these gospel ordinances come to be regarded as only religious forms, only then do men begin to think of displacing them with something else. Gospel truth and gospel forms go together. We believe that the gospel is the only hope for a sinner to be accepted with a holy God; and as long as men are conscious of this, they will express it in these two ordinances that picture to the world man's dependence on the gospel.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What five statements are made with reference to the purpose of baptism?
2. What three things show that the act of baptism is immersion?
3. Who is a proper candidate for baptism?
4. Where does the authority or responsibility for baptizing rest?
5. What four views are given with reference to the meaning of the Lord's supper?
6. Give the "close communion" view with reasons for it.
7. What reasons are given for the perpetuity of the ordinances?

OUR GOSPEL HOPE

I. The Second Coming of Christ

1. His first coming
2. Progressive coming of the kingdom
3. His final manifestation

II. The Resurrection

1. The fact of the resurrection
2. The nature of the resurrection body
3. The value of the doctrine

III. The Judgment

1. It will be universal
2. Christ will be the judge
3. It will be a judgment of testing and separation

IV. Heaven

1. We will enjoy full fellowship with God in Christ
2. We will be like Christ in character
3. We will have fellowship with the redeemed
4. We will serve God.

V. Hell

X

OUR GOSPEL HOPE

One other thing we need to consider in this course of study; namely, the hope that the gospel offers for the future. This might be considered under the head of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God denotes the rule of God.

We have considered something of what it means to have God come in saving grace into our hearts to drive out sin and to reign in righteousness. We want to consider now something of what the gospel offers in the way of hope for the future.

I. The Second Coming of Christ

1. His First Coming

Old Testament saints looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. When the Messiah came, however, most of the Jews did not recognize him and so rejected him. He was not the kind of Messiah they expected. They looked for a political Messiah, an earthly king. Jesus said that his kingdom was not of this world (Jno. 18: 36). And those who did receive him as Messiah were puzzled by the fact that he did not establish the kingdom they expected. When, therefore, he was crucified they thought it was all at an end. Jesus, however, gave them to understand that he would not do for them and the world during his earthly life all that he would do. When he went away, therefore, they could look back and see that he had done much for them, but they could also look with great hope to the future.

In this hope there were at least two things we should notice.

2. One Was the Progressive Coming of the Kingdom Among Men

He initiated or established the kingdom when he came with his gospel of salvatoin (Matt. 3: 2; Mark 1: 15; Luke 17: 20, 21). But he also promised them that his kingdom should grow and become mighty in the world. It would grow like a tiny mustard seed into a large plant and like leaven placed in a vessel full of dough until the whole was permeated by it (Matt. 13: 31-33).

3. The Other Was His Final Manifestation on Earth

Jesus did not seem to expect that evil would be finally overcome until the end of the age. In the parable of the tares he says that the tares and the wheat will grow together until the end of the age. Then there will be a separation (Matt. 13: 24-30, 36-43). This separation is to take place at the second coming of Christ. He will come to raise the dead, judge the world and usher in the eternal kingdom of God (Matt. 25: 31ff; 1 Cor. 15: 24-28).

This coming again of Christ was the great hope of the New Testament Christians. They did not know when it would take place. Jesus said that even he did not know (Mark 13: 32). Jesus did urge his disciples, however in view of the certainty of the event and the uncertainty as to the time to live righteously and be ready at any time (Mark ch. 13; Matt. ch. 24 and many other passages). Unfortunately this subject has become a divisive issue among Christians rather than a motive to holy living and Christian endeavor. One who has the hope of seeing Jesus should be pure as he is pure (1 Jno. 3: 2, 3).

II. The Resurrection

1. The Fact of the Resurrection

The New Testament teaches that there is to be a resurrection of the dead. This will take place at the second coming of Christ (1 Thess. 4: 16; 1 Cor. 15: 20ff).

Both the righteous and the wicked will be raised (Jno. 5: 28, 29; Acts 24: 15). There is practically nothing

said, however, about the nature of the resurrection body of the wicked.

2. The Nature of the Resurrection Body.

As to the righteous there are two things that seem to be clear. One is that the resurrection body will be continuous with the present body. Paul seems to assume this in 1 Cor. 15: 35ff. The body of the future will grow out of the present body as the stalk of wheat grows out of the seed planted in the ground.

The other thing made clear is that it will be very different from the present body and far more glorious. It will be a spiritual body, not a body of flesh and blood, subject to decay and death as our present bodies are. It will be a body marked by incorruption, glory and power as a spiritual body, over against the present natural body marked by corruption, dishonor and weakness as a natural body. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is of heaven. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly. As descendants of the first Adam, we are subject to death and decay; as sons of the second Adam, we inherit incorruption and glory (1 Cor. 15: 35ff).

What Jesus said in answer to the difficulty raised by the Sadducees also shows that the resurrection body will be very different from the present body (Matt. 22: 23-32). He says that in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but in this respect they are like the angels. We will not be raised, then, back to the present state and plane of life, but to one that is higher and more glorious. This is probably indicated also by the fact that Jesus in his resurrection body was so changed that his disciples recognized him with difficulty and he had the power of going through closed doors (Matt. 28: 17; Luke 24: 31; Jno. 20: 19, 26; 21: 4ff).

3. The Value of the Doctrine

The doctrine of the resurrection is the guarantee to us that we shall live on in the next world, not as disembodied spirits or "ghosts," but in the integrity of our personalities. Our spirits shall live on in glorified bodies.

When Christ is manifested he will raise the dead and transform the living. And so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4: 16, 17).

III. The Judgment

When Christ comes back to the earth, he comes to judge the world (Matt. 25: 31ff). In regard to the judgment, notice the following points:

1. It Will be Universal

All men will be there. We shall all stand before the judgment seat of God (Rom. 14: 10). The sea and the land shall give up their dead and all men, small and great, shall be judged (Rev. 20: 11ff). All nations shall be gathered before the throne of the Son of Man when he comes in his glory (Matt. 25: 31ff). There will be no escaping the officers of the law or bribing the court in that day.

2. Christ will be the Judge

The Father has committed all judgment into the hands of Christ because he is the Son of Man (Jno. 5: 22, 27). From this it seems that his humanity is the reason he is to be our judge. Of course his deity is also necessary if he is to judge mankind. He will be no cold unsympathetic judge, for he has suffered with and for us. He has the wisdom necessary because he is divine. In him the race was created (Jno. 1: 3; Col. 1: 16); he is the Savior of the world, and will be the judge of the world. All God's dealings with mankind have been in him, and he it is that will determine the destiny of all men.

It will be an awful thing for any man to receive a sentence of eternal doom from the hand of the one who gave himself that all men might live. The sinner who will not receive mercy at the hands of the Christ of Calvary must receive justice from the Christ on the throne of glory. Dr. A. H. Strong once told of a judge who had to sentence to death a foreigner who had committed a cold-blooded murder. The poor wretch could not even understand the language in which he was being tried. Moved by his wretched condition, the judge

broke down and wept. But regaining control of himself, he pronounced the murderer's doom. It was recognized as a just sentence because it came from a court tempered with mercy. So every doomed man's sentence in the last day will be recognized as just because it comes from the Savior of the world.

3. It will be a Judgment of Testing and of Separation

The purpose of the judgment will not be that God may investigate to find the truth concerning mankind or what any man deserves. All this he knows. The purpose will be to turn the light of eternal truth on the character of each man and assign his destiny and reward according to his character. There will be a separation of the good and the bad. It is sometimes said that the Christian will not be brought into the judgment. But this disregards the teaching of the New Testament that all men will be judged, and misunderstands the purpose of the judgment. The only kind of world in which men would not come to judgment would be one in which moral law is nullified. Salvation by grace does not do away with moral law. It provides for forgiveness and healing in harmony with law. We will come to judgment and receive rewards according to our deeds, whether they be good or bad.

IV. Heaven

The term heaven stands in our thoughts for the glorious destiny awaiting the children of God in the next world.

What kind of place will heaven be? What kind of life will God's people enjoy in the next world?

1. We will Enjoy full Fellowship with God in Christ

Paul teaches that when the Christian dies he goes immediately to be with the Lord (Phil. 1: 23). Jesus teaches that those who believe in him do not die (Jno. 8: 51; 11: 26). For the Christian, then, death is not something to be dreaded; it is an entrance into a more glorious life of fellowship with Christ. What we experience in this

life of fellowship with God in Christ is just a foretaste, the first fruits, of what we are to enjoy hereafter. Heaven will be the full fruition of that which we enjoy here and now. If a man, therefore, does not have something of heaven in his soul in this world, he has a very poor basis to hope for heaven after death. When this life of fellowship with God comes to its final realization it will include the resurrection body as well as the soul. Paul teaches that the Spirit abiding in us now is the foretaste of the coming glory and the pledge of our final redemption (Rom. 8: 11; 16-25; Eph. 1: 13, 14; 4: 30).

2. We will be like Christ in Character

To have full and unbroken fellowship with Christ means perfection of character. When we shall see him, we shall be like him (1 Jno. 3: 2). Fellowship with him here transforms us and drives out sin partially. Complete and face to face communion on the other side will do this completely. If one says: "If I thought I would get to heaven when I die, I would take my fill of sin"—if one says that and looks longingly in his heart toward a life of sin, he will not get to heaven. One cannot go to heaven with sin in his heart, and sin is in one's heart as long as he loves it. Every thing that defiles and makes a lie will be left on the outside (Rev. 22: 15). The Christian is here set in the direction of being like God in character; he will there completely attain.

3. We Will Have Fellowship with the Redeemed

John in Revelation sees the throng of the redeemed ones that no one could number (Rev. 7: 9). Nothing specific is said about this fellowship with one another, but it might be a fair inference. Besides, if they have fellowship with the Lord, they would have fellowship with one another.

The question is often asked: Will we know our loved ones in heaven? Why not? The old saying ought to be true that we will have as much sense there as we have here.

But according to what Jesus said, we will doubtless not sustain to one another the same family relationships that

we do here. (See Mark 3: 31-35; 12: 24, 25). At least these relationships will be swallowed up in higher ones. All our relationships there will be determined by our relationship to God as his children.

4. We Will Doubtless be Engaged Actively in God's Service

John says that his servants will serve him (Rev. 22: 3). Our blessedness there will not consist in eternal idleness, but in the absence of all sorrow, sickness, pain and death (Rev. 21: 4; 22: 3-5), the absence of everything that makes activity painful and laborious. Even in this world work is a blessing. No man finds real happiness in idleness. And in that blessed land our highest joy will be to live in the light of God and the Lamb and to engage in the service of him who redeemed us from all sin and evil.

V. Hell

We come now to the dark side of the picture. Hell is the opposite of heaven. It is the fruition of a life of sin and unbelief. It is the natural result of rebellion against God. Jesus calls it the hell of fire (Matt. 5: 22, 29ff; 10: 28; 18: 9, etc.). The book of Revelation calls it the second death (Rev. 2: 11; 20: 6, 14). It is the place prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25: 41). It is the abandonment of the soul to its own wickedness.

There seems to be no hope that the soul entering its dismal confines will ever find escape. Jesus says that between Lazarus and the rich man in torment a great gulf is fixed, so that there is no going from one side to the other (Lk. 16: 26). He says that the wicked shall go away into "eternal" punishment (Matt. 25: 46).

This does not mean that God delights in the torment of any soul. It means rather that if men will not have mercy, if they will not turn from sin, God can do nothing but leave them to the destruction that sin brings upon them. God can do no better for the soul because the soul will have no better. When the soul destroys its own capacities for righteousness and all that is good, God

can do nothing but give the soul up to its own evil way and the results of its evil way.

Truly godliness is profitable both for this life and the life that is to come (1 Tim. 4: 8).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In what three senses has Christ come or will come?
2. What is said about the fact of the resurrection?
3. What is said about the nature of the resurrection body?
4. What is the value of the doctrine of the resurrection?
5. What three things are said about the judgment?
6. What four things are said about heaven?
7. What is said about hell?

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